Glimpses of Realization

THE THREE BODIES OF ENLIGHTENMENT

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Chögyam Trungpa

Judith L. Lief, Editor

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May the teachings of the Vidyadhara, so profound and to the point, continue to flourish for the benefit of all beings.

—-Judith L. Lief, Editor

ONE

Why We Are Here At All

Fathers and mothers are one in space;
therefore, nobody gets pregnant—
or everybody gets pregnant. Nobody gives birth;
therefore, everybody gives birth simultaneously.
Mother and father are in the process
of making love all the time.

The topic of this book, the three bodies of enlightenment, is somewhat out of the ordinary. Without a background in Buddhist study and practice, it may be difficult for you to follow. However, I am going to try to present the feeling of it rather than the whole thing. As you read, I want you to be open and awake. You have to use your antennae rather than purely your brain. In that way, we could make our journey together.

The three bodies of enlightenment are three types of atmosphere, which are involved with ordinary everyday life as well as with enlightened mind. The first body, to start from the beginning, so to speak, is background or origin. It is why we are here, not why we are here in this particular hall or why we are studying Buddhism, but why we are here *at all.* Why are we here on this earth? Why is there earth at all? Why is there sun and why is there moon? Why all of this? The first body seems to be our basis, or starting point. We start from outer space, to begin with. Then we slowly get into inner space and earth.

We have metaphysical, conventional, mythological ideas about

why we are here—but those theories could be regarded as a load of bullshit. They don't actually say anything at all, but are based on re-reading old books and reducing ourselves into bookworms. There is a problem with space—literally—physically and psychologically. The psychological aspect is the tail end of the question and the physical aspect is the forerunner. *Why* do we have a problem with our space? *Is* there any problem with space, for that matter? There may be or there may not be. Things are not going too well in my life or things are going fabulously in my life—whatever.

Three expressions from traditional Buddhist texts summarize this whole area: unborn, unceasing, unoriginated. Such a summary isn't particularly helpful, but it at least gives us some landmarks. Of those three terms—unborn, unceasing, and unoriginated—the first is unborn. What are we going to do with that? Basically speaking, we are not born, we don't exist. That's the truth. It is a very courageous truth, a truth spoken or expressed because we are not afraid to tell the truth. It is the utmost truth. If you are afraid of telling the truth, what you say becomes bent truth, or a lie—but when you relate with the actual truth, although it may not be convenient or an ideally good message for the listener, you still speak the truth. From that point of view, we are unborn, we don't exist.

If we are unborn, if we never give birth to ourselves, how is it possible that we are here? We might say, "Literally, I was born from my mother, and psychologically speaking, I seem to have preconceptions of things. Ideas are born in my head or my heart, and I'm executing those ideas in my life." But *who* said that? That is the point. Who is actually talking about those things? Who is questioning that whole idea? Who is asking the questions? The questioner, of course. But who is the questioner? *What* is the questioner, rather than *who* is the questioner.

If you look back and back and back, after and after and after, it is like overlapping onion skins—you approach outer space and you find that nobody actually said anything at all. It was just a little burp.

Somebody burped, which was misunderstood as language. Then, after that, someone said, "I beg your pardon?" And somebody said, "Oh, of course, I'm sorry. I burped." That cosmic burp, or cosmic fart, was an accident—a complete accident, unintentional—and that is what's called the origin of karma. Everything started on an accidental level. Everything is an accident.

When we get to that level, we are looking into enormous space. We are discussing and thinking about enormous space. That particular enormous space—that inconceivable, enormous space—is the basis of the original unbornness. We could ask a subtle question about the unbornness of space: "How is it possible for space to exist eternally, if space doesn't give birth to itself constantly? Otherwise, space would be dead." That's true. If space didn't give birth eternally, space wouldn't exist. The reason space exists constantly, but still maintains its unborn nature, is that space *never* gives birth! That non-giving-birth seems to be giving birth to a larger extent than giving birth in the literal sense of having a father and a mother and cutting the umbilical cord. So birth does exist in the realm of space in the sense that space constantly gives birth by itself. An analysis of space is that it has both masculine and feminine principles, both together. Fathers and mothers are one in space; therefore, nobody gets pregnant—or everybody gets pregnant. Nobody gives birth; therefore, everybody gives birth simultaneously. Mother and father are in the process of making love all the time.

We have a unique process at this point: immense space, which exists eternally or noneternally, does not give birth and at the same time does give birth, immense birth. That is why it is called unborn. Unborn is the safest way to describe it. If you have to use a term, it is much better to say unborn than eternally born. If you say eternally born, there is a tendency to think that somebody is being nursed. We think that we are going through the process of bringing up a child from infancy to the level of teenager and young adult up to the level of old age and death. We think that we have a process to go

through. However, with this particular notion of space, we have no process to go through. Unborn is already birth. Therefore, no infancy or teenagehood or youthfulness or middle-age or old age or death exists. They don't exist because nothing happened! That seems to be the basic point. That all took place at a nonexistence level. This is very hard to understand if you look at it from the perspective of trying to understand. Obviously, when we try to give birth, instead of being unborn, something begins to be born. But now what we are trying to get to, and to understand—or not understand—is the *unbomness* of the whole thing.

There is a pattern taking place, in any case; and that pattern is workable, understandable, and realizable. However, in talking about that, we always reduce everything to a very domestic level. Not only do we reduce everything to the household domestic level, but we reduce everything to the bedroom level, saying, "If I did this, would that happen to me? If that took place, on the other hand, what would happen then?" and so forth. But in this case, the whole thing is beyond the domestic level, absolutely beyond the domestic level. Because of that, we can discuss it and we can question it. There's a lot of room for freedom, enormous room for freedom. It's not as if we are not allowed to talk about anything, or if we ask anything, we are dumb. Instead, *because* we are dumb; therefore, we are intelligent. There is a new opening of freedom, a level of freedom that we have never known in our life. That is why the whole process is very outrageous and quite incomprehensible, quite rightly so. Nevertheless it is understandable. It is feel-able, you can feel it.

On that basis, we do not discuss what section of that process belongs to samsara and what section belongs to nirvana. We do not even use those terms. The whole idea is that it does not belong to, for, or against. When we talk about nirvana and samsara, we take sides. We think of nirvana as our friend. We would like to associate with our friend, nirvana, and have enlightenment as our goal and aim. On the other side is samsara. Samsara means being imprisoned;

samsara is confusion and pain. We do not want to relate with samsara or be a victim of that deadly area. That way of thinking has become the problem. Our conversations and our understanding of all this have been diverted to the level of what should be and what shouldn't be, rather than what is and what isn't. So we don't realize that, in fact, we are helpless. We don't realize that we cannot challenge this gigantic cosmic course that's taking place. We can't even sign our names to be in favor of it or against it. The whole thing is helpless.

We can reduce ourselves into a grain of sand; but, at the same time, we are part of outer space as a whole, cosmic space. So we need to have a certain amount of open mindedness, rather than always asking, "What does this mean to me at this point in my meditation practice? What does this mean to me in terms of my salvation? I have a problem with my husband, I have a problem with my wife. Is this particular argument, this idea or concept, going to save me from that problem?" We are not talking in those terms, at this point—we are talking BIG! We are actually tapping into an area that we have never touched, never looked at. Because we are so confused, we do not bother to look, apart from maybe the occasional glimpse. We think, "Who cares? This is not my cup of tea, my kettle of fish." We think that we were too poor, that it is too painful. We don't want to look at those areas that exist on a greater scale.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is about time for us to look! It is time to think bigger and open our minds to the possibility that nonduality does exist. You may not be philosophers or great meditators, but there is the possibility that greater areas could be opened to you if you bothered to look, if you bothered to open your minds. We are not talking about Tibetan Buddhism or Indian Buddhism at this point, or any other *ism*, but about how we could associate ourselves with a larger-scale world. To do so, we are using that mind in which we are not involved with *isms* of any sort.

A larger world exists, but we have never looked at it. We are too concerned with our microscopes or our magnifying glasses. We try

to make things large by using magnifying glasses, but we have never looked at outer space with our naked eyes. If we looked into it, we could find it—but we don't have to use our binoculars and telescopes, we don't need them, they are false pretenses. We don't need any means to do this, we could just simply *'look at it,* whatever it is, and enjoy it. An immensely larger version of thinking and of celebration is taking place. That seems to be the very important point.

STUDENT: When you make a statement that something exists and at the same time it doesn't exist, does that mean that the entire question of what you're talking about just doesn't arise?
VIDYADHARA CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: You got it! It's the pre-question level. It is unconditional. Unfortunately, we don't have a term for that level. The closest is *state of being,* but that automatically implies existence, which is conditional. Unconditional being doesn't even rise to the level of question or the level of finding out.

S: Does unconditional being have qualities or characteristics?
VCTR: Unconditional being does not have qualities, but, somehow, it has nonexistent qualities. However, saying that it has nonexistent qualities is entirely different from saying it does not have any qualities or that it is blank. Do you see the difference in saying no quality as opposed to nonexistent quality?

S: It's very easy for nonexistence to become just another thing—in my head, anyway.
VCTR: That may be necessary, to begin with.. We have to have something to work on. From that point of view, we are not being particularly dogmatic.

S: I really find it difficult to know how to use this material. If it's beyond experience, we can't say, "How can I have this understanding or this experience?" That would be beside the point.
VCTR: That's right. That *is* beside the point, in fact.

S: But to go off and forget about it would also be beside the point.

VCTR: You got it. That's right. In discussing this larger scale of thinking, novices at the beginning level might have difficulty understanding. In fact, they might find the whole thing extraordinarily claustrophobic. That's possible, because there's no room to move about—and there wasn't ever *meant* to be room to move about *at alll*

S: It seems that everything you're talking about—or not talking about—is pointing towards the play of energy. When you talk about space and unbornness and a nonexistent quality, it seems that you're talking about a dance, or the play of energy.

VCTR: That's a bit of a tricky question, if I might say so. You are trying to get something out of that space, some kind of energy. But we haven't gotten to that level yet, we are still talking about space, rather than energy. At this point, as far as *this* level is concerned, we are not concerned with the idea of energy *at alll* We are simply concerned with understanding how the paradox can exist out of nowhere. We are not talking about energy.

Energy is very easy for people to understand, and if there is negative energy and positive energy, that is very graphic. But that is not quite what we mean here. In fact, that is the source of a big misunderstanding in mystical Hinduism, which has the idea of Brahman being all-pervasive, and in Christianity and Judaism, for that matter, which talk about the all-pervasiveness of God. In talking about all-pervasiveness, automatically the concept arises that if God is all-pervasive, there must be energy. The concept is that there should be the energy to be all-pervasive, rather than that nonexistent energy could *still* be all-pervasive. That possibility has never been looked at. So those cultures fail, from this point of view, and Buddhism wins. Rather than saying, "It's okay. If you find everything is nonexistent energy, that's fine," they have two levels: divinity and outer-space. That seems to be the difference.

S: Is there an openness to the *possibility* of energy, before talking about energy itself?
VCTR: We are not talking about energy! It's just openness. Of course, some logic is involved. If it's openness, at the same time, that equally means utter claustrophobia. Space is not particularly good or bad. Claustrophobia is not regarded as negative nor is openness regarded as positive—they are equal. There is a parallel between the two; in other words, both are the same. Whenever you see light, in a dark or light form, it is the same—you are still seeing something.

S: Is there awareness at this point, or is that too dualistic?
VCTR: Yes and no equally. Awareness is a very big topic, actually. When there is awareness, that automatically means categorizing and pinpointing something in particular or something in general—and that blows the whole thing. It begins to make everything extraordinarily chaotic and messed up. However, if there isn't awareness, then nothing is comprehensible or perceptible at all. You don't have anything to work on; you're just loose, in the realm of stupidity. So what we are talking about is *between the two*—not actually between the two, but it's *both at the same time.* It is intense awareness that sees all the details immaculately—simultaneously, this awareness does not exist, because of its so-aware quality. Because of its utterly awake quality, awareness is superfluous. We are still talking about parallels at this point. It is possible to perceive this; actually, it is very simple.

S: When you speak about the nonexistent quality, could a synonym be either non-apparent or non-projected? Do those terms have something in common?
VCTR: I wouldn't say so. Those terms are very tricky. Nonexistence is better. Nonexistence is a very simple term, which actually speaks of life and death. The other terms are somewhat manipulative business-deal terms: this happens, therefore that doesn't happen, which means everything happens at the same time. All things happen because things don't take place; therefore, they do take place at the same

time. When you become bankrupt, you become rich, because you have become bankrupt. If you have a case history of becoming bankrupt, that means that you have big projects in your mind, so you still carry out that richness. Although your business failed, that is an incidental problem, it is not particularly a big deal. You had a bank account and it got corrupted.

S: Rinpoche, a term came to my mind, *unmoving awareness,* which is something that happens in zazen meditation—a state of unmoving awareness.
VCTR: That's saying the same thing, I think, in that it is unconditional. When you begin to move, that is the same as conmanship, you are trying to con somebody. If awareness doesn't move, you don't con. Usually, in our ordinary behavior, movements are regarded as restless or as attempts to attract attention.

S: Does the openness occur at the point we are willing to accept chaos into our lives?
VCTR: We are not talking about the *path,* at this point, or when openness *occurs.* Openness is there *already,* all the time! We are talking about what actually is there, rather than when something occurs as an *experience.* We are talking about the backbone of the whole thing. So the occurrence of opening, the moment when it happens, doesn't exist at this point. We are talking about outer space rather than inner space.

S: I guess I'm getting hung-up in trying to relate it to myself.
VCTR: That has become the problem. You try to relate with this as if you have a little lunch box and you can take it and eat it in the corner.

S: I don't see the difference between taking this big view and the power of positive thinking. The basic message seems to be that it is okay to think big—and somebody had to tell you it's okay.
VCTR: I think that the power of positive thinking, conventionally,

is trying to think everything is going to be okay, that there's nothing to worry about. But that is not enough, so the ordinary power of positive thinking is also thinking that somebody is going to help you or to save you from this problem. You think the divine is going to descend on you and save you; therefore, you have nothing to worry about. Humanistic, Buddhistic, nontheistic positive thinking is completely different. It is unknown. People have not been taught to look at things in that way. Generally, positive thinking is regarded as a cure, or medicine, rather than as a self-existing process. In the case of nontheistic positive thinking, however, nontheistic positive thinking is nondogmatic and not giving. In a sense, it is very mean, because you don't give a shit about anything, you just accept it as it is. You just let go and bulge out into outer space.

S: Is this space alive and existent in itself, or does it depend on the existence of paradox? Or should one give up any kind of effort or logic?
VCTR: It is existent by itself. It doesn't depend on anything; therefore, it depends on everything—not helplessly.

S: In addition to unborn, you mentioned two other terms, unceasing and unoriginated. I was wondering whether there was any difference between those three terms, any kind of distinction, or whether they are synonymous.
VCTR: I think they are the same: unborn, unceasing, and unoriginated. I was reading Longchen Rabjam's writings on this topic, and when I opened the book, the appropriate teaching came through. He said that the idea of openness and unbornness is a product of fearlessness. There is no fear to see. For instance, supposing you are an astronaut, and you are allowed to jump out of your rocket ship. There's fear, a sense of death, and a sense of enormous alienation, because you can't go back to your particular earth, where you came from. That is quite different from parachuting from airplanes, because airplanes are within the atmosphere or compass of this earth. However, if you are suspended in outer space, there is fantastic fear,

transcendental fear that you have never known before. You do not want to die out in the open in that way.

If you jump out of an airplane, on this particular earth, you feel better—at least you are going downhill. You feel great, because compared with that, if you jump out of your rocket ship in outer space, you have nothing to hang on to, and nobody's going to receive you. Your body is not going to splash onto *anything-,* it's just going to be recycling all the time, dragging through the whole of phenomena. That's the kind of situation we are talking about here. This particular teaching comes from the ati teachings of the tantric tradition. The ati tradition has an absolutely accurate concept of the outer-space journey from a meditative point of view. It's extremely accurate, as if the ati teachers had themselves been astronauts.

S: Rinpoche, is this any different from saying that if I die, awareness still goes on?
VCTR: It is more than that: we are talking about the death of experience in *this* life, rather than what happens if we jump out of the Empire State Building. It's saying the same thing—it's just a much larger version of that whole thing.

S: It seems that what you are saying should give all of us extreme courage to try anything. Is there any limitation on that?
VCTR: We are not talking about *trying.* That is a sign of cowardliness. Trying has a sense of desperation. Instead you have confidence in everything and try nothing. That seems to be the point. If you try everything, you begin to become a junky—spiritually, physically, or whatever it may be. We are not talking about that level; we are talking about a larger version of thinking and opening.

S: How can you say that trying is nonexistent? Don't you have to try in order to see the trying?
VCTR: When you begin to try properly, you find that you don't exist—you're simply trying. Your exertion is working very hard, but you don't actually exist. Your exertion begins to take you over. It's

like an airplane flying by itself or a train running by itself.

S: Is it like tension that's just there, or trying that's just there?
VCTR: It's something like that, but I think you have to experience it—you can't just talk in terms of hypothetical possibilities.

S: You started out by speaking about why are we here, and then you went on to discuss the unborn. I didn't quite get the connection.
VCTR: Somehow, we find why we are *not* here. We *are* here, obviously, but we are *not* here. Nobody's here. This particular hall is vacant, nonexistent; therefore, there's a big crowd. Does that help?

TWO Cosmic Disaster

In fact, the dharmakaya concept is somewhat of a nuisance. It actually provides a division between the enlightened and the unenlightened, the enlightened level as opposed to the unenlightened level. But maybe having another side of the coin, as opposed to this side of the coin, makes things more extraordinarily celebratory.

Extended vision means that we have to step out completely from any concern and take an immense leap to a living experience of the perceptions of mind. That particular leap tends to be somewhat exaggerated or extreme because we do not allow any space or concepts to linger between perceiver and perception. Things become extraordinarily bigger in scale, so that we begin to lose track of who is actually perceiving and who is not perceiving at all—and that could be said to be the epitome of perception in the fundamental sense.

From that type of perception arises the notion of extreme extension—you are extended completely, extended extremely, extended as far as you can go. That is to say, if you have numeral figures, your figures begin to extend extremely until finally zero after zero after zero doesn't make any sense—and that whole experience begins to come back to square one, where you started. It comes back to the number one, or to zero, and that begins to dissolve along with the rest of the figures.

The whole thing, whether you put particular figures on it or not, becomes complete zero. There is a kind of recoiling process, as that infinite quality begins to come back. In fact, as that extension is closest to the infinite, it becomes number one or zero—and one or zero become infinite. So you begin to lose track. At the same time, you begin to gain a sense of perspective in which *you* do not exist, the *perceiver* does not exist—purely those phantoms of infiniteness exist.

In other words, nothing is lost. The infinite becomes your aspect of intelligence. You are only infinite; therefore, you have intelligence that can function and expand immensely. You can actually work with that infinite quality. Once your mind has expanded in such an outburst without any booster—that is to say, the reference point of "me here," or "I'm here"—starting with the number zero or one, that whole process becomes very fast, extremely fast. We have used this analogy before, and I would like to repeat it again: you run so fast, round and round and round, that finally the fastest way to run is to stay still. You run so fast that you begin to see your own back, and you begin to become still. At that point, the whole thing begins to become infinite. When you hold still, you supercede any kind of speed at all. You become the ultimate and utmost winner of that particular race.

From that point of view, being back to square one is one version of infinity. You are not back to square one in the sense of dragging yourself back or thinking that you have solved all your problems; and you are not back to square one in the sense that you went on and 011 and on, and finally you find yourself doing the same thing all over again. That's not the kind of square one we are talking about here. In this case, back to square one is the infiniteness of immense immeasurable space and expansion that you experience. Therefore, it is absolutely absurd to try to search further—and the only way *not* to search further is to *be,* to *stay,* to stand or sit still. That is the basic-point.

However, we have a problem with that experience. We have the

problem of retracing, or tracking back, what happens in our experience. By tracking back, we try to make some kind of *security* out of holding still. (I hope this makes sense for you, I sincerely hope.) We go through constant speed and constant stillness, constant death and constant birth. We go through all those processes simultaneously, at once, constantly. Each time we do this, a click takes place—and we expand into the infinite level. Some kind of click takes place, some kind of flash. That is quite unnecessary, as a matter of fact; nevertheless, it does happen.

It always happens that way, fortunately or unfortunately, and that is known as dharmakaya—unfortunately, actually. We do not need to have such principles, but they begin to arise—unnecessarily. Dharmakaya is called *dharma-kaya,* because it is the embodiment of all norms, all laws, all forms, all experiences, all dharmas. All existence is embodied in this particular *kaya,* which literally means "body." Kaya, or body, is not just the physical body, it is any tangible situation or tangible state, such as, for instance, the psychological body. So dharmakaya is a basic norm that exists unconditionally.

That basic state, dharmakaya, *does* exist because it does *not* exist. It is unnecessary, simply a matter of getting a new hair cut. That particular experience is known as the beginning of the case history of the enlightenment principle. Earlier, when we talked about the infinite quality of the totality, the notion of enlightenment was superfluous. But somehow, some naughty child dropped a pebble in this particular pond and it began to create ripples. Therefore, we have the existence of dharmakaya in the form of a bubble. From this point of view, the notion of enlightenment is not ultimate liberation, final salvation, final transcendence, or emancipation. Instead, enlightenment is the realization of back to square one. It is understanding infiniteness, realizing that infinity creates a spark, somewhere along.

Such infinite simplicity is a tricky point. It is possible for the

infinite simplicity of this click or flash to be extraordinarily simple or immensely complicated. It is possible that it is immensely complicated to figure out who actually pulled the trigger. Who did that? And who perceived the whole thing, and how and where? When you pulled the trigger, what kind of gunpowder did you use? What kind of bullet? What kind of gun did you use? Who had the motivation to pull the trigger at all? All those little details begin to become very complicated—and that is what is called the dharma. The simplicity cannot contain itself. It has to be explained by verbalizations of some kind—and the process of explaining and verbalizing the whole thing turns out to be absolutely complicated. In turn, there are what are known as the 80,000 dharmas. Those dharmas are absolutely unnecessary. However, because of their unnecessariness, they tend to become absolutely important.

Dharma is manifesting the truth. If we want to speak the truth, we have to *demonstrate* the truth. We have the truth, the truth is very simple—but truth can be attacked from all directions. Somebody may say, "If you're telling the truth, then this happens, but I find that does not quite correlate with what you have said. So how do you answer that question?" Then you have to answerback, saying, "Well, that is the case; nevertheless, this is what we are trying to explain." Then somebody else comes in from another corner of the universe saying, "That's okay, but on the other hand, something else pops up. How do you explain that?" So there are points of view or interpretations of truth based on confusion.

The truth is one, one dharma. The 80,000 expressions of dharma exist because there are 80,000 confusions, rather than because there are 80,000 dharmas, particularly. Each confusion can be worked with, explained verbally, and demonstrated in its appropriate way. Consequently there happen to be 80,000 dharmas. As I have said already, that is unnecessary. It shouldn't happen that way, it wasn't meant to. There was no particular plan it *all*, none whatsoever! However, things turned out to be that way,

unfortunately.

We cannot apologize to anybody. It's just a cosmic disaster, and that cosmic disaster is called the dharmakaya. Basically, dharmakaya is a cosmic disaster. Dharma is truth, kaya is form. Truth is like water. If you speak truth, in order to taste the water, you have to put it in a container, you have to drink it, and you have to swallow it. However, as soon as that free water is consumed through our mouth into our throat, we find that unconditional water becomes conditional. Consequently it is turned into piss. That's true!

According to the mahamudra slogan, dharmakaya is "the indivisibility of samsara and nirvana." That does not mean that to be good guys or good girls, we need to say that we are all one. It does not mean that we are all on the level of sisterhood or brotherhood. That is a statement of resentment, in a sense. In fact, the euphemistic phrase used in the Buddhist scriptures—"the indivisibility of samsara and nirvana"—is not true. What it is meant to say is "the *unnecessariness* of samsara and nirvana," rather than "the *indivisibility* of samsara and nirvana." So indivisibility is a euphemism for unnecessariness.

That notion of indivisibility seems to be the seed of the love-and-light ipproach. In fact, that's where the problem started, right at the beginning. Everyone is looking for union. Everybody is looking for unitiig you and me together so we could have domestic or cosmic union. Everybody's looking for pleasure and recommending world-wide peace. Everybody's tired of the pain and warfare, the neurosis and complaints, the millions of mosquitoes, the thousands of fleas, and ill kinds of things that bother our lives. We are so tired of the whoe thing. We are looking for uniting something together so that we con't have to fight, so we don't have to kill these mosquitoes or flea; or irritating friends, but instead make final friendship with somebody completely and properly. We would like to proclaim our-selv<s and make ourselves feel better. We would like to be great herc;s. We would like to take the heroic approach that finally we are opei-minded people. We do not accept any of the bullshit of sepa-

ratism. Instead, we could be united, we could be happy. We could be one good, universal, cosmic family. In fact, that has been the problem, always. It is a problem rather than a promise or any kind of sanity.

The problem actually goes much deeper than that. Once you have made immense, beautiful unification and unitedness, you can fly the friendly skies where everything is completely hospitable, but you are not particularly hospitalized. Everything's fantastic! Fantastic service takes place all the time. At that level, that sense of unification and bringing things together as a happy family has created spiritual materialism. This is its long-term history. It's early history is that it is the *embryo* of spiritual materialism, as a matter of fact. We have that seed in our mind right at the beginning, before we begin to make sure that everything is going to work out. So everything begins to be a trick of some kind; and that trick functions in our life to provide all kinds of promises, kicks, and euphoric meditative states. That trick was begun right at the beginning, as early as that.

So the notion of the indivisibility of samsara and nirvana is not so much the indivisibility or *union* of samsara and nirvana—it is more the *unnecessariness* of it. That is an extraordinarily intelligent way of viewing the whole thing—as completely matter of fact, absolutely matter of fact. Things just happened that way. Therefore, as it (that way, let it *be* that way. The 80,000 separations of dharma are taught to people who do not understand that dharma is unnecessary S >, on one hand, prescribing particular ways to behave has become unnecessary. It *will* be necessary, on the other hand, if you begin to se- the unnecessariness of it. If you see the unnecessariness, then it becomes necessary. That is a little twist—which has to be taken with a arge dosage of leap—otherwise, the whole thing doesn't make any sense, it becomes pure riddles, and you can't live in a world of riciles. Although the Zen practitioners might say there's something o it; nonetheless, we find it difficult, sitting on our yellow and red zifus.

The unnecessariness of the whole thing tends to bring is the

necessity of everything, at the same time. The concept of kaya is not needed; however, it happens to exist. In fact, the dharmakaya concept is somewhat of a nuisance. It actually provides a division between the enlightened and the unenlightened, the enlightened level as opposed to the unenlightened level. But maybe having another side of the coin, as opposed to this side of the coin, makes things more extraordinarily celebratory. We could celebrate and we could develop a sense of humor! I do not mean humor in terms of making fun of somebody else, as in, "Ha-ha your neighbor's garden is so funny and yours is so straight." Instead, because you have a neighbor at all, it's very funny. It's ironical.

STUDENT: Earlier you talked about the burp that was mistaken for speech, and you said it was all an accident; and now you are talking about the pebble dropped into the pool as dharmakaya. Are those two the same thing?
VIDYADHARA CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: The point of the burp is simply that we have to experience a .larger version of the phenomenal world, which is bigger and tougher than we think, with lots of room all over the place. The burp is the pre-dharmakaya level, which is technically known as vajradhatu. The pebble in the pool is the sense of freedom, that you can do that. It comes out of that larger version of thinking.

S: The idea of unnecessariness is annoying, for some reason, in that it seems to be pointing at something else beside what's happening, something richer. You seem to be using some external criterion in relation to which you can say that something else is unnecessary.
VCTR: I don't see that there's any problem. Why not? Because there is a problem; therefore, things are as they are. When we say unnecessary, we are not *complaining,* particularly.

S: I was actually thinking of the yogachara one-mind teaching. From

that point of view, all phenomena are irrelevant, arbitrary—-just accidental expressions of the one mind.
VCTR: From this point of view, which may be entirely different, the notion of one mind isn't needed at all. Even that expression is unnecessary. Things are happening quite smoothly all the time, in their own way, so imposing rules and regulations seem to be out of the question. However, now something has actually taken place. That something takes place out of the atmosphere—or the spirit, rather—of wasting time. So the point we come to is that maybe it is necessary to waste time.

S: Is that the big dose of leap you were talking about before?
VCTR: Yes. That leap is also redundant, in some sense—but maybe you have to take another leap. Maybe it is redundant to waste time, but somehow that makes everybody happy. That is the diplomatic approach. Everybody has something to do, including the scholars.

S: If wasting time is redundant, where does practice come in?
VCTR: Practice comes along with that, obviously, sitting and doing nothing. Maybe that goes against the Protestant ethic; nevertheless, it frees from Protestant neurosis.

S: When you spoke about speed, you connected it very much with expansiveness and a sort of explosion. You talked about losing track, that the speed becomes so fast that you are standing still, so there's no ground for distinction of speed or not speed. In the past, when I've heard that analogy, it usually referred to your confusion speeding so fast that you think you are standing still. In that sense, it is just an intensification of your confusion. Here there doesn't seem to be any idea like that at all.
VCTR: I think it is saying the same thing. We are talking about the unnecessariness of a boundary between samsara and nirvana, at this point. So whether we say that your neurosis is so fast that it stays still, or your wisdom goes so fast that it stands still, we are saying the same thing.
S: I was doing a more hinayana interpretation of the idea of speed,

which is that your mind is reeling. But that doesn't seem to apply here.

VCTR: Let me make the whole thing absolutely clear—let us not regard the word *speed* as a pejorative term. Speed is a descriptive and neutral term. We do not regard New York as having a problem with speed, particularly. In fact, a certain form of speed maybe necessary; it's an expression of pragmatism.

S: You seem to be using the term speed positively, as part of the expansion.

VCTR: Yes. I think we are changing gears at this point.

S: How don't you waste time? What is time?

VCTR: Again, when we talk about wasting time, we are not talking pejoratively. It is not that if you waste time, you have screwed up or you are terrible. We are not using judgmental language. Instead, when we talk about wasting time, it is absolutely neutral. We are saying that a particular time does not have any goal or immediate results, so conventionally speaking, it could be said to be a waste of time. But we are not particularly looking at that situation in a pejorative or prejudiced way.

S: What produces the flash from the space, or the click? Is it some sort of tension building up between the space folding in on itself?

VCTR: I think it's a question of seeing one's own back. You are running around so fast and you're not getting anything out of it, except yourself. That's very simple, nothing particularly mystical about that! However, that particular experience is called enlightenment.

S: It sounds like it could be the click of something snapping in your neck while you're trying to see your back.

VCTR: I don't think so. It's very, very ordinary. It is not particularly biting your own tail, however, it is seeing your own back. It's an anthropomorphic analogy.

S: Is that moment also an expression of transcendental fear? I mean,

are the wasting of time and the speeding expressions of fear that gets to the point at which it is so intense that it transcends?
VCTR: Not necessarily, because as I have said already, wasting time is not taken as being naughty or needing punishment. Wasting time is regarded as somewhat necessary. It's like having to take a pee in your toilet: you're wasting your pee, but you have to do it, anyway. Obviously, you're wasting your pee, you're flushing it down to the sewage system—but doing that is not regarded as bad. We have to understand that wasting time is not a pejorative, negative, prejudiced term.

S: You said that practice is inseparable from wasting time, but practice also seems to increase one's own fear.
VCTR: That goes on all the time. At this point, the pain and pleasure that derive from practice are regarded as absolutely equal. It is not as if getting some pleasurable experience is a sign of one's development and feeling painful experiences is regarded as a regression. That approach does not apply anymore. Everything is on equal terms. Pain and pleasure are the south and north poles of one world.

S: It seems like this flash, this stopping, could happen at any time, and it could happen again and again.
VCTR: Infinitely, yes, all the time. It's not like a fisherman waiting for a fish to catch. If you take that attitude, the whole thing is very poverty-stricken. Nevertheless, it happens all the time.

S: But once that flash happens, it doesn't imply that everything is okay. I mean, the flash happens—and then it's not happening.
VCTR: Not happening is okay, too. That in itself is one of them—because of it's unnecessary quality, or indivisible quality.

S: So there would be no notion of clinging to the flash?
VCTR: If you cling to it, that breeds more samsara, which is a necessary part of the whole thing; however, *that* necessary *is* pejorative.

S: Rinpoche, are you talking about egolessness, in terms of not differentiating between this and that?

VCTR: It is unnecessary to discuss egolessness, actually. The notion of egolessness is very heavy-handed and it makes people extremely guilty. You feel that you're being a bad girl or boy, and now you should do something about it. You feel that there's a better version, egolessness, and that if you give up your thingy, you'll be a freer and a better person. However, we are looking at things from an entirely different viewpoint, which comes from a different space-time perspective. If you constantly approach things from this level, the notion of egolessness doesn't apply. That question does not apply anymore.

S: You talked about this perspective being intuitive rather that experiential. Does that intuitiveness develop through your sitting practice? Because I don't feel very intuitive.

VCTR: I think that is saying the same thing. In other words, sitting practice *is* that, rather than intuitiveness being something that would develop *through* sitting practice. From this point of view, sitting practice is not regarded as a process of cultivating something, or as a technique, or means, to develop something else. Instead, sitting practice is in itself the goal. The goal and the path are one. Therefore, sitting practice is no longer regarded as training. The sitting practice of meditation has become just simply that in itself, acting out what is there already.

S: Rinpoche, in describing the experience of running faster and faster, are you saying that you are running so fast on one side of the coin that it flips, or are you saying that the coin is flipping so fast that you can see both sides of the coin at once?

VCTR: It is the second, that you can see both sides of the coin at once, not the First.

S: The click that you described as dharmakaya, as enlightenment—is that an experience or only a description?

VCTR: It is both; they are the same thing. However, I wouldn't use

the term, *experience,* actually. Experience would be the wrong term to use, because when we talk about experience, that automatically has a confirmational quality. We experience something, we register that, and finally we make it a part of our life—and then we remember that. In contrast, that click is unconditional panic. That panic doesn't register in your mind, although it is an actual experience in your life. But you experience it without making a case history out of the whole thing.

S: Then why did you begin by describing the quality of *expansiveness,* or going so fast that you are standing still, and then say that there's a completely accidental click, which is dharmakaya. Why isn't the state of expansiveness dharmakaya? Is it because the contrast is needed?
VCTR: It is, in some sense, obviously. Nevertheless, that contrast comes with a great volume of infiniteness. When you experience a greater and greater volume of infiniteness, eventually you get so much that you can't handle the gigantic volume anymore. You have to burst your particular balloon. So you burst your balloon—and then you stand still. That is an expression of everything getting out of control and the infiniteness beginning to take over the whole thing. Do you see?

S: Is that only a momentary click?
VCTR: It is a click in the sense of beyond control, rather than a click like a flash bulb flashing on your face. It is a moment of having to give in to something. One has to give in to something. From that point of view there is a click, a stillness. It is as if somebody in back of you suddenly surprised you—you don't actually stop still, but you tend to click.

S: What is the relation of vajradhatu and dharmakaya? Earlier you talked about vajradhatu as the experience of basic positivity, the big picture. Now you are talking about a perspective in which you see the basic condition—or the basic lack of condition. Is the first level vajradhatu and this level dharmakaya? Are they different moments of enlightenment?

VCTR: I think we could say that the form—or the intelligence, if we could use such a word—exists out of its own speed. When you find vajradhatu speeding immensely, you find dharmakaya. As a matter of fact, the scriptures say that vajradhatu is like milk and dharmakaya is like churning butter out of that milk. Because the milk has been worked up, finally some kind of solidity takes place. So from that point of view, you could say there are two levels: vajradhatu and dharmakaya. Nevertheless, butter *is* milk, in some sense. In dharmakaya, there is still that basic space. It is continuous. Basic space happens continuously.

S: Is there a difference between dhatu as seed and dhatu as space? What is the relationship of those two concepts?

VCTR: That's an interesting point. Dhatu, which literally means seed, also means space. That is, dhatu, or seed, is an analogy for space—outer space, the space in the room, the space in a cup. Space has its fringe and center, at once, constantly. There are seeds everywhere, which create space, center and fringe simultaneously. It is a constantly overlapping process. Overlapping the fringe, or boundary, is another center; and that boundary overlaps another center, which overlaps another boundary, which becomes a center, as well. So center and fringe are saying the same thing. In other words, there is no center and no fringe anymore—it's equally space. The whole thing is like a gigantic pancake. Everything is in the center as well as on the fringe.

S: As you talked about the dharmakaya experience, Rinpoche, I kept relating it to my own experiences with acid, in which the ego reaches a state of panic. There's a tunneling experience and a back and forth between complete awe and panic. I have often thought that LSD experience must be the dharmakaya. I'm trying to relate all this to what some of us may have experienced—or maybe I'm looking for a confirmation of that experience.

VCTR: I don't think it's the same, because that kind of drug experience happens purely by artificial means. Because it is based on hal-

lucinogenic drugs, it is known as a shadow experience. There is intense excitement and extensive depression, and that also tends to bring an immense sense of spaciousness and highness. However, what we talking about here is free from physiological conditions. It is a purely psychological experience. In fact, we can't even pinpoint it as a psychological experience—it is a sense of totality. This experience is on another dimension. We have never tapped this particular area; nevertheless, we are dwelling in it. We are surviving in it, yet this particular experience is unconditional. It is called unconditional because you can't pinpoint it. If you try to pinpoint it, it's so loose; at the same time, if you try to experience it, it is so vivid.

S: You have often differentiated between experience and achievement. When one experiences this sense of enlightenment, or dharmakaya, is it an achievement that will stay with one, or is it an ephemeral experience that will just become another thing in one's past.
VCTR: It is unconditional experience, which does not need to be recorded, but takes place constantly—unnecessarily.

S: When you leap, how do you step down again?
VCTR: Once you have leapt, you are already on the ground, so you don't have to step down from the leap. The leap is from the space to the ground. You actually begin to sink into the mud or the sand of the ground. There's no platform built for you. It's a big plop!

S: In talking about seeing things as they are, without dualism, you mentioned that the dualism is unnecessary Then you said that when you see the unnecessariness, it becomes necessary. I was confused about that point. Could you explain that a little further?
VCTR: I'm glad you got confused. Because of that we have something to work on together. That seems to be the basic point.

S: A few moments ago you explained the origin of dharmakaya as basic space speeding so fast that it solidifies. That doesn't seem to make any sense. How could basic space speed or not speed?

VCTR: In order to survive in space, you've got to do something about it. It has to be very efficient and organized. So one corner of space gets crammed into the other corner of space. One corner begins to get the message of the other corner, so panoramic efficiency takes place.

S: Why dharmakaya?
VCTR: Because for the first time, some kind of division between this and that—in a very embryonic sense—took place.

S: Is dharmakaya developed from *that* level, or is it just a reflection from *our* level?
VCTR: Dharmakaya developed from *that* level!

S: You seem to be saying that it's necessary.
VCTR: Unnecessarily necessary.

S: You keep referring to necessary and unnecessary, and I don't understand them. Necessary and unnecessary in terms of what?
VCTR: It is unnecessary to raise the question at all; however, because it is there, because that question *does* exist, it had to become necessary. In other words, the question in itself is hollow, transparent; however, in order to express the transparency of the question, one has to ask the question. You see?

S: No
VCTR: For instance, in order to celebrate a coronation, you have to have the empty chair of the king, to begin with. It is necessary in some sense, but in another sense, it is obsolete.

THREE Self-Existing Grin

The question of dharmakaya's existence is that it need not exist at all at the beginning. It's too bad, too good, whatever. Then, after that, a fantastic upsurge of humor comes along. That humor arises not in the nasty sense of making fun of everybody else or making fun of oneself, but as a self-existing grin.

The next set of patterns is that of unceasing energy. Conventionally, if we have energy, we try to manipulate it and work it into particular work projects and purposes. We feel that we have to create further projects and processes in order to maintain our existence. But in this case, the question of energy could be looked at in an entirely different way. That is, if energy is unceasing, there's no need for manipulation. We can't—and we don't have to—sort out anything. It is needless to sort anything out or to look out for anything at all.

The basic ground, the dharmakaya principle, exists as a fundamental necessary measure. Since that has taken place and developed already, it seems that the next process, the sambhogakaya process, is not to question that but to proceed along. The word *sambhoga* means "enjoying pleasure," or literally, "interested in pleasure." It has a slant towards opportunism and it also has a hint of indulgence, as far as the terminology goes. Beyond that, the whole thing is natural and simple, just dealing with energy. It is simply energy—energy which need not

be sought; energy which need not be worked with, but energy to *be* with, basically. There are a lot of ideas, and a lot of insights and perceptions as to how can we do things without completely speeding along and trying to get something across from a pragmatic point of view. The point is that there is lots of room, a lot of space.

There's immense intensity in dealing with the world of existence—so what is the point of trying to intensify this world further? One of the attributes of sambhogakaya is play. Basically, play has the qualities of mischievousness and humor. However, in this context, a sense of humor does not mean cracking jokes or trying to be funny out of embarrassment. Humor is not another mask or facade we put on, and it does not mean turning everything into a big joke. Particularly when there are shortcomings or irritations—with oneself or with whatever comes up—we turn everything into a big joke. If a person is brave enough, quite possibly he says, "This joke is on you, not on me." But that's quite far out, in the sense that he is going too far.

In contrast, the sense of humor associated with the sambhogakaya principle is light. It is light as opposed to heavy. Such humor also has an uplifting quality, although that particular phrase has been overused. Nevertheless, in this case we are using "uplifting quality" in the proper sense, as a quality of light-heartedness. When we say "uplifting quality," we do not mean being relieved that everything is getting better or feeling that things are finally becoming humorous enough that they don't bother us. We are using upliftedness in the sense of light-heartedness. It is a quality of light-heartedness beyond ego's heavy-hearted level, rather than light-heartedness in the conventional sense of ultimate frivolity.

To review: The question of dharmakaya's existence is that it need not exist at all at the beginning. It's too bad, too good, whatever. Then, after that, a fantastic upsurge of humor comes along. That humor arises not in the sense of making fun of everybody else or making fun of oneself, but as a self-existing grin. That self-existing

grin takes place all the time—throughout our sleep time, when we sit on the toilet seat, when we are confronted with challenges. Throughout everything that goes on in our life, we have that self-existing grin. That grin takes place all the time.

I am not saying this to cheer you up or to make you into more productive good guys and stronger people. The British might have said, while they were going through the Second World War, "Everybody should keep a stiff upper lip." But we are not talking about that kind of humor, particularly, that sort of heavy-handed ha-ha. Such humor can only develop when you are in national chaos or personal chaos. For instance, I hear that at this point in the economic crisis, such humor is coming up. It is not that we finally become human beings because we are imprisoned within our human condition facing warfare and depressions of all kinds; therefore, we should stick together and cheer each other up. We are talking about an entirely different kind of humor. Sambhogakaya humor is not the result of depression, and it is not as if you are pressed between two lead plates and someone is trying to make an impression out of you. We are not talking about a depressed situation or being pressed between two objects.

The closest description I can think of for this kind of humor is some kind of light in the atmosphere. The point is not that the flying-saucer people are going to save us, nor are the Mahatmas from the theosophical world going to save us, nor is Jesus Christ going to save us—nor the Buddha, for that matter. Such lightness is not involved with any savior mentality. Usually whenever we talk about light and grace and upliftedness, we approach it from the level of poverty. Although we have been such bad people and the world is in such poverty—we think something good will come down and dawn on us; we think something is going to save us immensely and let us rejoice. But that style of rejoicing is extraordinarily depressing. We are substituting pleasure for pain—that seems to be the only result of such an approach.

There is nothing wrong with the traditions of Christianity and Judaism, but people's attitudes to such great traditions have cheapened them. That is the biggest problem. In talking about light-heartedness and light and love, everything is based on somebody who is going to save you. If you smile, everything's going to be okay in the name of Shiva or Krishna. That's absurd! We are still looking for a transcendental nipple or baby bottle. That approach has been a constant problem all along, throughout our lives. In contrast, when we talk about cheering up—or the ultimate, if we may say so, love and light approach—it is well founded in reality. It is a realistic approach, which is that you are *already* rich. Since you have immense richness in you already, you don't have to ask for somebody's pardon or somebody's loan. Organizationally we do, but spiritually we don't have to.

The notion of feast, or celebration, is very difficult to understand. Should we just try to cheer ourselves up, because there is a lot of richness taking place around us? Not quite. That's still a poverty approach; there's no individual personal dignity involved. Whenever there's personal and individual dignity, *asking* seems to be unnecessary—you just take advantage of that richness. That is what's known as "vajra pride." Poverty mentality means experiencing the lack of something or other, then trying to get it from somewhere else. But we don't have to experience that lack—we could actually experience a sense of richness.

Approaching our whole experience as if somebody will save us from bouncing our check is very sad. It needn't be that way at all. It is so obvious that doesn't have to happen. Where that mind came from, I don't know. It's ludicrous! The closest guess I can make is that some fundamental theistic inclination begins to tell us that we should feel little and the other should feel bigger, great, glorious. That's just a rough guess. This isn't an attack on the theistic disciplines, particularly. Maybe it is the human condition that human beings like to worship somebody, out of their poverty, including hungry, ego-centered emperors and kings.

Rulers of the world have that same problem: they feel that they are cheap and that they haven't fulfilled their wishes and their kingdom to the level that they should. In contrast, the sense of humor depends on a humanistic attitude. In talking about a humanistic attitude, we do not mean humanistic psychologists or pragmatists. Instead we are talking simply of the ape level. Having a humanistic attitude means accepting our ape qualities—being willing to grunt and not trying to be too genteel. I suppose that our desire for union with God is that we want to be better persons, we have higher ideals. Such rubbish! We would like to be Him or Her, that great fantasy that evolved. We want to boycott our apeship.

All of these perspectives of mind, all of this material, provides an enormous bank of potential humor—not humor in the sense of looking down upon something, but humor in terms of what *is*, basically speaking. We begin to feel that the sense of humor is what *is*, what actually is, fundamentally speaking. The sense of humor is not cracking jokes; it is not trying to cheer ourselves up; and it is not having connections with somebody higher or greater than us. The sense of humor is what is.

By being back to square one constantly, we find lightheartedness in the ultimate sense. Such humor is not the regular, ordinary level of humor, as we usually understand it. In this case, the concept of humor is a sense of celebration. That celebration cannot happen unless we are willing to give up the territories that evolve around us. Territory means that you would like to have things *your* way. You think what you are doing is great, but at the same time, there is a faint doubt. Maybe you are not doing everything wholeheartedly and properly. Maybe you cannot make it up to the prescribed level. You can't be a good meditator, a good sitter, all the time. You can't constantly keep up your humor all the time. You have your weak moments. Your weak moments show. Of course! Why not? That's part of the celebration! Otherwise, there's nothing to celebrate. If you don't have your weak points, what's left?

Just blank white, without even a dot of ink, on the sheet of your life.

You can celebrate because all kinds of things are involved with your life; therefore, it is a source of celebration. There is contrast—this and that, that and this—and things can't be sorted out properly and put into proper perspective. So let it be that way! That seems to be the source of celebration, in fact! What we are discussing comes out of no logic, by the way. There's no logic at all for that particular perspective. Definitely there's no logic for that. In studying this, maybe the Sanskrit or Tibetan linguistics student might find it very hard to accept, in terms of scholarship. However, it is the flat and hard truth.

Talking about flat truth is like talking about flat water. If your particular glass of drinking water does not have a fizzy quality, it's just flat water. When we talk about hard truth, we are talking about vajra. You accept that you are going to bump into this big blade of crystal-clear vajra, this diamond sword. If you push too hard, it is going to cut you into pieces. There is the sense of humor for you! It's not very pleasurable and it is not particularly entertaining—but I'm afraid it is all-pervasive. That hard-core vajra diamond blade is very powerful. It's like swallowing babies that have lots of pines—porcupines! Baby porcupines! Swallowing baby porcupines! That is the sense of humor. You could laugh at that, if you like, but that is very meaningful.

Why would anybody want to swallow a baby porcupine, anyway? The point is that there is a sense of delightfulness in the whole thing, although it is very demanding. It is extremely demanding, actually; but you might find even *that* is extraordinarily delightful, for the very fact that you are not completely wrapped up in the situation. When you finally think of that demand, you find that it is usually quite spacious at the same time, because with such a demanding situation, there's room to have fist fights with the world. You can fight and you can argue. You can put things into proper perspec-

tive, rather than feeling that you have sunk into the situation, that you have no choice, and finally, you are completely bound to that particular situation, which is very hellish.

The question seems to be very clear. When you hear about having a playful attitude but at the same time being extraordinarily solid, you think you would never make the mistake of swallowing a baby porcupine down your throat—so why do you? The question that comes up again and again and again is why we are doing all this, obviously. Why *should* we do all this? The answer to that, roughly speaking, is that there is *no reason* why we should do this! That is the answer—because there is no reason. If you ask why we should do this, there is absolutely no reason, absolutely not!

The principle behind this approach is that we are not presenting dogma of any kind at all. We are not looking for ways to convert you to our truth. We are not saying, "If you get involved with us, you are going to have a good color television, you are going to have wall-to-wall carpet, you're going to lead a happy life, you're going to be meeting very interesting people throughout the world, and you're going to have a gold Cadillac." We are not talking in those terms at all! Because of this lack of glamour and lack of promises, a lot of people might find this approach absolutely depressing, extremely depressing. Usually, telling the truth is very depressing. If you mix the truth with a bit of lying, if you add a bit of salt and pepper by lying, you find it more delicious—but somehow our lineage doesn't allow it to happen that way. Nor is this particular spokesman, a holder of the lineage, particularly inspired to do things that way. So things are black and white, straight and square—and *because* of that, there is a lot of humor. That straightforwardness and bluntness is very cute.

On the whole, we are not discussing what you *could* be or what you *should* be, but what you *are.* People have never heard that type of truth before. There's always a tinge of salesmanship involved with telling the truth: "That is what you are, of course—but we can help you!" On this particular earth, there are a lot of such spiritual trips.

The consecutive trips we find or dream up could fill the whole universe—and each one of those trips begins by telling us, "That may be what you are, but you shouldn't worry about that. *We* have the remedy for you." In each of those spiritual trips we are told, "No matter how terrible you are, you could be okay, we could save you. It is terrible, absolutely terrible. Nevertheless, we know that, and we are going to save you. You should take our medicine and pay us more money. You should come to us and join us; then we will have something to say about that whole thing. If you take refuge in us and if you trust us, then we can save you." Somehow, however, in approaching all this from the angle of and according to the ongoing intelligence that exists through the blessings of the lineage, we cannot say that. Instead, we say, "You are *not* going to be saved. You have your problems—that's fine, everybody knows that. Let it be that way. If you could improvise something along with that, maybe that would be good—but at the same time, one has to stay with one's own problems." That is the only demand we can make at this point. It is not particularly a money-making venture, but more a lightening of the air, so to speak.

There's a need to develop a sense of humor. That sense of humor seems to be the point of the sambhogakaya level. The preliminary approach to the sambhogakaya is celebration and indulgence. The sambhogakaya is the level of pleasuring constantly. It is the level of celebrating one's life, which comes with a sense of humor. Humor is the constant flow or thread that runs through one's life. Without that you cannot celebrate. If there's no humor, you cannot celebrate, and the party begins to become a drag, as we know.

STUDENT: The sense of humor of the sambhogakaya level seems to develop out of an extreme hard-headedness, extreme vajra-headedness, extreme non-indulgence. Is that right?
VIDYADHARA CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: Yes.

S: Such humor comes about not because something is funny, but because there seems to be no choice. There seems to be nothing else but this humor.
VCTR: That's right. You have choiceless humor.

S: I don't understand why, at the vajradhatu level, space, in order to survive, must do something. You said that one corner of space wondered what the other corner of space was doing. I don't understand why space would wonder at all. What prods the space or makes the space move at all?
VCTR: That's quite a serious question. Why should things happen that way—or any way at all? We do not know; we have no idea about that. That's why we need a path, or journey: we have to figure out it out by ourselves. If all the riddles had been solved at the beginning, we would have nothing to work with. The whole journey would have been made already, so there would be no point in saying anything at all. In that case, we might as well go to Disneyland. We might as well go to sensory deprivation programs or get into a tank and take LSD. There is no point.

That *why* seems to be the path. We can't solve these problems on the spot. At the beginning level, the approach is to tell us all this is possible. We have been told that there are possibilities of this nature and we might be involved in very intriguing situations—but let us find out. That seems to be the basic approach. The journey is what is important.

Every talk does not have to be a confirmation. If listening to your student or to your teacher had to be a confirmation, it would be extraordinarily boring. If the speaker were telling you the complete truth all the time, probably it wouldn't make any sense. That

is why the truth is not told all at once. To do so would be a completely big flop. Instead one tells just a fraction of the truth—one-quarter of the truth, one-hundredth of the truth—which allows people to seek *further* truth and take the journey. In any case, even if we tried to tell the whole truth, since it is known as self-secret, you probably couldn't understand anything at all. You have to make the journey, in fact. That seems to be the point.

S: On the mahayana level, it seems that compassion is always moving the Buddha towards talking to you, towards even bothering. That doesn't seem to be the same.
VCTR: I think that's saying the same thing: compassion is being willing to let you get into it. We don't look down upon you as being a bastard, particularly.

S. I'm trying to follow your development from dharmakaya to sambhogakaya. What I understand is that the dharmakaya question of unnecessary wasting time is developed further, in the sambhogakaya, to the point at which it's drowning you. You're actually drowning in the wasting time. You're caught up in it emotionally. It's like sentimental music that should be too corny for you to be involved in, but you begin to cry anyhow, although you shouldn't. The fact is that you *are* drowned, and there's no right way of swimming. It is like drowning and being lost in sentimentality—and that's the way it is. I suppose that's where the sense of humor comes in. Does that sound like an accurate picture?
VCTR: That sounds perfect, sir. Let's share that world together!

S: Could we say that the sambhogakaya produces the sense of humor about this mess that is our life?
VCTR: We could say sambhogakaya *is* the sense of humor. That sense of humor is the cause of the world of art and of all kinds of expressions. If we don't have sambhogakaya we don't have any communication. Because of sambhogakaya, we can shape things into forms, we can try painting different colors.

S: Should this sense of humor develop naturally? I really have problems with it, because I take things too seriously I don't see the humor in things.
VCTR: When you begin to realize you are taking things seriously, then that is it.

S: But it's so painful—how can you laugh at it?
VCTR: Whenever there is pain, work with that. It's not a question of cracking jokes, making things light, or making things funny. Instead, a general perspective of choiceless humor always comes along with that pain. Usually we are so involved with general principles, ideas, and achievements that we do not pay attention to the details of what is happening in our life. We want to eat our apple, but we don't regard the core. We don't ask how the core feels about the whole thing, we just eat the apple and throw the core in the garbage. But that could be a very humorous situation. We do a lot of things without consideration. We drink our cup of tea, not considering the cup and the plate and what's left behind—the tea leaves and everything.

Things are done in such a blind way all the time, and the sense of humor doesn't work—but that doesn't necessarily mean you are *incapable* of humor. If you pay more attention, there is more humor. So when you walk out onto the street, if you pay more attention to the by-passers, your own steps, and your state of mind at the time, you find there is a lot of room for everything. Everything you find is so dharmic, every gesture—including large scale, small scale, medium-small scale, and small-small scale domestic details. You find there is lots of room, immense room for everything—and once you begin to see that, you also begin to be able to appreciate puns.

S: Does vajra pride or confidence have any ground, and what is that ground?
VCTR: Vajra pride doesn't seem to have any realm. You are not bound to any particular world; you do not have to relate with any

particular world. People of vajra pride do not pay income tax to the realm of the buddhas or the realm of human beings or the realm of hell beings. Vajra pride is free. But in order to develop vajra pride, you have to supercede karma, so that you don't have karmic debts.

S: Is there a sense of richness?
VCTR: I think so, yes, naturally. Needless to say.

S: Does the sense of humor enable you not to be so trapped by your neurotic behavior or would you just as likely continue speeding along on the same neurotic path?
VCTR: I should be very careful and clear here. Humor is not the saving grace that is going to help you all over the place. Absolutely not! You have things you have to work out yourself, so there's no room for that kind of magic—but the sense of humor *does* bring perspective to the whole thing. The sense of humor could be a troubleshooter and a consultant. You don't go looking for anybody else; instead you could develop your own sense of humor, your own troubleshooter. That saves a lot of energy and money.

S: Pride seems to be more a problem than a promise. How is the regular kind of pride we seem to indulge in related to vajra pride, and how is that related to dharmadhatu?
VCTR: That's a big question. Vajra pride has nothing to do with the arrogance of ordinary pride. Although it's called by the same name, that's just for convenience's sake. As for ordinary pride, you know as much as I do. Basic pride has inquisitiveness, or intelligence, in that you are looking for alternatives in order to win your particular position. That type of pride hurts immensely. It is very painful because if you do not compete properly and you fail, your whole trip is going to go down the drain. So in ordinary pride, that kind of pain takes place as well. On the whole, such pride is anti-humor. In fact, when there is pride, there is no humor—that relationship is very direct.

When humor takes place, when you are able to see things lightly —not airy-fairy lightly, but lightly in the sense of realistically—things

are not as bad as all that. When you begin to see that, you begin to see through the pride. Pride is usually an experience of complete desperation. You are so desperate. You feel so poor and hungry and penniless. Although you might be a millionaire; nevertheless, there is the attitude that you should fight for the universe to give you justice because, "I'm so poor." So, on the whole, I think that such pride is actually aggression and anti-humor.

S: How is all that related to vajradhatu being pre-dharmakaya or super-dharmakaya? And is dharmadhatu synonymous with those terms, or does it have something to do with the sambhogakaya?
VCTR: The space of vajradhatu is unbiased space that is willing to accommodate the pre-dharmakaya level as well as the dharmakaya level. Vajradhatu is willing to accommodate everything. That's why it is known as indestructibility, because it has no bias towards anything. It has no bias for either samsara or nirvana or for pre-samsara or pre-nirvana. So the whole thing is completely covered, a diamond field.

Dharmadhatu seems to be related with the sambhogakaya process. Dharmadhatu is somewhat connected with the experiential mind world, although this particular term has been used by all kinds of people expressing philosophical metaphors of all kinds. In a secondary way, dharmadhatu may be involved with the world of pleasure, that is to say, the world of sambhogakaya. As an extension of that, the dharmadhatu could involve the nirmanakaya and all the worlds that exist beyond that.

S: How does dharmakaya relate to the mahayana concept of shunyata, or emptiness? Does it come out of emptiness?
VCTR: Shunyata is mahayanist jargon, and we are not even touching that, because we are so snobbish at this point. Shunyata is simply a perspective in which students begin to feel a sense of nonexistence and a sense of everything being full at the same time. There are lots of *little* humors involved with shunyata, but since we are talking about a

larger world, greater business, so to speak, discussing shunyata does not seem to be particularly worthwhile. Shunyata is a lesser form of vajradhatu, of much less extent.

S: You said that sambhogakaya means pleasure body, yet it seems that the sambhogakaya sense of humor is not particularly enjoyable, but rather, an appreciation of feeling needle points.
VCTR: You are right. It is pleasure in a larger sense. Usual pleasure, conditional pleasure, requires a lot of conditions to maintain that pleasure. It requires security. But this pleasure does not need any kind of security at all; therefore, it is free pleasure. In the ultimate sense, pleasure does not have any conditions. That's why this particular pleasure principle is connected with freedom or enlightenment. Enlightenment also means freedom. You are finally let loose, liberated, free.

S: We are sometimes told to really and fully get into the sense of hopelessness and pain of samsara, to pay particular attention to that. Where in that is there room for a sense of humor?
VCTR: That *is* the sense of humor! When you begin to feel a sense of helplessness, you find yourself humorous, because there's nothing that you can do to get around it. Earlier we talked about the British sense of humor, the stiff upper lip they kept up during wartime. That kind of humor differs from this, in that this is an *ongoing* condition. It is constant: when you feel helpless, you don't feel hopeless, but you feel humorous. Because you feel humorous, you begin to develop confidence. Then, as you develop more confidence, you begin to develop fearlessness. So you go along in that way. Without humor, there is no way to conduct the whole path, no way to join the two opposite situations together. That seems to be the basic point.

S: Is it the awareness of the situation that makes the difference?
VCTR: Not only awareness, but awareness with humor. If you're just aware, you might dig your own grave; whereas if you are aware

with some kind of irony, or humor, then you are not quite digging your own grave. There's lots of room for everything. It is fascinating, inquisitive.

S: So we could celebrate our confusion?
VCTR: I wouldn't exactly promise that, but something *does* happen. Let's put it vaguely: something takes place. It doesn't solve all our problems, but actually, there is a Star of David shining on the horizon.

To begin to understand the material in this seminar, it is important to practice sitting meditation. Meditation practice is extremely important, so that we do not pollute the world by our intellectualization of the dharma. It is very important that we begin to kill the unnecessary pollution of intellectualizing the teachings. We can begin to feel what is meant by all this by sitting properly, following the example of Lord Buddha.

Four Light-Heartedness

The sambhogakaya perspective is that there is a
kind of centralization or energizer.
There's a sense of fountain, sun and moon, and torch.
From that, a lot of luminosity or light can shine through.

At this point, we have descended from the space of the dharmakaya level to the energy of sambhogakaya. In the transmitting process from the dharmakaya down to the sambhogakaya, the first impulse of the sambhogakaya principle seems to be a sense of humor and energy. Energy and humor begin to develop and materialize as basic common sense. In this case, basic common sense does not simply mean being rational or pragmatic or mechanical, like a computer's mind. Instead, it is the basic sense of perspective that keeps us alive. The sambhogakaya perspective is that there is a kind of centralization or energizer. There's a sense of fountain, sun and moon, and torch. From that, a lot of luminosity or light can shine through.

Luminosity is the sense of celebration that comes with the sense of humor. Humor and celebration are indivisible at this point: celebration *means* sense of humor. Celebration means a sense of delightfulness, an uplifting quality. We could use all sorts of jargon, but fundamentally speaking, celebration is a sense of *earth,* actually celebrating the earth, and a sense of earth and space making love

together. Humor comes from space, or sky, and earth is the celebration. When the earth begins to celebrate, space begins to make love to the earth—that's the meeting point of earth and space. They begin to mate together in a very solid and definite and humorous and delightful way. There's nothing particularly funny about that, in terms of jokes. Everything seems to be very straightforward and simple. Earth blossoms and sky begins to pay attention to it. Sky begins to shine all kinds of light over the earth and accommodate it with its space to grow flowers or trees, to maintain rocks, waterfalls, skyscrapers, and highways—whatever we have on this earth.

We don't have to be particularly romantic about it. We're not just talking about *nature*, we're talking about *reality*. In terms of *reality*, earth produces pollution, and sky or space begins to make love to it. Space begins to get into the solidity of the whole thing—so the hard-core earth begins to make love to the light-handed space. The meeting of the two takes place constantly. Such humor and delightfulness is not dependent on good or bad—that particular philosophical outfit. The whole thing is purely a phenomenological process; it is about things as they are, in the very basic and subtle sense.

The question arises, "What are we doing with all this? What is the purpose?" This is like asking, "What is the purpose of life?" or, "How's life?" for that matter. It is the same question. And the answer is that there is not very much purpose—life operates on its own accord. Life is operating purely for its own sake, every moment, in every individual situation. That may be the purpose of life, so far as the present situation is concerned. However, even that is questionable.

The purpose of life does not exist—or it exists eternally—and the relationship between those two is how a moment of life begins to click with itself constantly. If it doesn't click, then you have no purpose in life, you are a bastard. However, if you begin to feel that the purpose of life is to click with itself, and some kind of spark takes place, then the purpose of life is fulfilled. It doesn't go further than that. There is nothing very profound, deep, metaphysical, or philosophical about it;

and no enlightenment questions are involved. Let's take that very heavy light-hearted approach! In that way, the purpose of life is to exist. It is to keep the pot from boiling over. We keep watch that the pot doesn't boil over, keep everything under control and regular. That may be terribly depressing, but that's what we do.

What's the big deal about it? What is this all about? Well, there's nothing. There's nothing! If anybody tries to make meaning out of life, there is nothing. People try to say that you are leading a life and that your life is a profound life, that it means a great deal, an infinite number of things. People say, "Let me explain to you how your life works, and what is the meaning of your life." Everybody likes to interpret. They love to tell you about the line on your palm, how it goes this way a little bit up, this way a little bit down, and therefore this means something to you. Or they say that you have this particular star connected with your life, and this is a little bit off this is a little bit in; therefore, your life's meaning is *immense*! The way you behave, the way you speak, the way you yawn, the way you sit—this is the purpose of life. It means something to you.

We are constantly discussing futuristic plans. We are talking about our *futures* all the time—we are not at *all* talking about our present state. We are not discussing this present state at all, so we have no humor. Watching our palm, we are concerned, we grin, we make faces: "I wish I had this line a little bit off from that line, then I would be exactly what I wanted." Hard luck! Too bad! You were never made up that way, obviously. That's the answer. The theists would say, "Trust God. He made you." A nontheist would say, "Who cares?" In any case, however, it seems that we are involved with the present situation, very much so. The present situation involves us with the sense of humor, and that sense of humor tends to bring all kinds of light-heartedness—not in the pejorative sense, but in the very personal, pragmatic sense. Light-heartedness means taking things gently, rather than aggressively. That brings all kinds of possibilities, all kinds of situations and locations. With that in mind,

we can begin to relate with the various types of light-heartedness that exist.

Light-heartedness is traditionally known as luminosity, which is the intrinsic quality of the sambhogakaya level. The sambhogakaya is the level of enjoyment, the level of celebration; and celebration is equal to the sense of humor. In the sambhogakaya we have a kind of basic wisdom, which is made up of five wisdoms brought together—and light-heartedness seems to be the preparation for that wisdom. The five wisdoms are traditionally known as the five buddha families. These five buddha families are five expressions that exist in our system, our state of being. Those expressions are our innate nature in the present moment, the *immediate* moment. Rather than having the *potential*—if the line on your palm says so, you're going to be rich or you're going to marry a dark handsome man in three years' time—in this case, it is very *immediate.* It is apropos in the *present.* It is your personal situation, which takes place *on the spotl*

A lot of us have a fear of that. Often we have a *lot* of fear, *immense* fear, of that. We don't want to relate with the present moment, because we haven't had any opportunities to practice or prepare for all this. We don't want to have a sudden gush of wind that demands our attention and sucks us in or blows us out. I think that approach is what is known as bullshit—and actually, that is happening all the time.

Depending on your composure, or your level of deception, you manage to block all sorts of things out. For instance, you may have had a big blow-up; but when you come to the next room and deal with your colleagues, you say that everything's okay, everything's fine: "Nothing's wrong, and what can I do for you, sir?" Somehow, we have been trained that way, to keep two faces. We may feel highly disturbed, absolutely disturbed, but we don't want to show that sort of thing. That is the moral, ethical, set-up of the theistic traditions.

The reason the theistic traditions bring that approach is that our

own personal relationship to God is extremely depressing. We know that we are not adequate to match up with God, not adequate to get near to Him. On the one hand, we can shift gears by saying that God is magnificent, powerful, fantastic, and extraordinary. We can think about those qualities. On the other hand, a meeting of the two never takes place, although there is electricity. That electricity is explosive and, at the same time, destructive. Sometimes such explosiveness could be taken advantage of; it could be creative. But one never knows the face of God—it's a mystery to us.

Since we have no understanding of the face of God at all, making friends with God means that we are constantly taking a chance. If you are a good friend of His, He might decide to blow you off or He might decide to take you in. That kind of uncertainty is constant in the Judeo-Christian tradition. There's a long-lasting tradition of such a love/hate relationship to God. It goes on all the time. Sometimes people don't want to reflect that hatred to God. They don't want to blame Him, so instead, they blame the world. However, the world is His extension, His creation, so if you blame the world, you are blaming God—and then you might feel some powerful reaction from God.

That approach has become a very serious problem. It leads to a lack of humor, basically speaking. Spiritual traditions are supposed to develop a sense of humor, not fear—particularly if you are an accomplished person. But that tradition provides mostly fear, rather than humor. Maybe that has something to do with the individuals who look into it rather than the actual doctrine. We are not debating or discussing the basic theology of any particular tradition. Instead we are talking about our approach to our world, whether it is the world of gods, the world of pleasure, or the world of pain. So we are talking at a very personal level, at this point, an extremely personal level

In preparation for discussing the five types of buddha family[1]; to begin with, we have open space, general open space, completely open space. That open space is full of all kinds of personal experiences.

Those experiences could be said to be dualistic ones; nevertheless, that's not particularly a consideration here. Open space is concerned with vibrating energy, with very powerful solidity, and with the electricity that goes between the two. Open space can provide an immense wind between the two; open space can provide immense waves of water between the two. That is what we are concerned with. We are concerned with all of those elements and all of those forces of energy-

There is energy above, which is watching and glaring at us; there is energy below, which is completely yielding, opening, and at the same time, somewhat threatening and solid. Between the two are created all kinds of sparks. So energy in immense measure is taking place. Those energies seem to be very valuable and valid. At the same time, they are what they are. They function all the time. We might hope they don't function, but they still do function constantly. Sometimes we attempt to reverse the process and change the universe forward-backward. However, if we are tempted to do so, we find that the only thing we can do is write about the theoretical possibility of that—we are unable actually to do so properly since we are not Lords of the Universe and we haven't evolved ourselves into that type of cosmic power. That has become a problem, an immense problem. But there is an immense sense of freedom at the same time, in that we finally give up trying to remold the universe and its structure. Instead we find ourselves giving in, opening, and letting go. We just remain as corpses lying in a charnel ground waiting for the vultures to eat us up.

[1] Vajra, ratna, karma, padma, buddha. For discussion see Chapter five, pages 57-63.

STUDENT: In my experience, fear seems to be a direct reflex of that energy, as the energy arises and knocks you about. Is there nothing we can do about that fear, no specific way to deal with it?
VIDYADHARA CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: The point is that we have not quite made a connection with the larger scale of the world. We usually feel that if we kill our enemy, that will be the end of discomfort. We think that if we do something to him, then he or she will go away and we'll feel comfortable, since we have gotten rid of our little enemy. However, things do not happen that way. Everything happens on an absolutely larger scale.

Once we begin to feel the logistics of the whole thing, we might feel ourselves completely belittled, just a grain of sand stuck in the midst of a gigantic world. So the first fear is the fear of being little, that we are not powerful enough, like the analogy of the mouse and the elephant. The second fear is the fear of fear itself, which begins to become problematic. As for dealing with the fear, developing ways to deal with it means we are not actually getting into the fear properly. Instead, we think we could outsmart fear—and that's not possible. We can't deal with it at all, so before we do anything, we have to *give up* that we can deal with it. That may be the first way of dealing with fear.

S: Isn't it possible to be in the charnel ground and have the vultures come down and devour me, only not completely devour me, because I get up and walk away? It seems that I do that all the time: I get partially devoured, then I run. How do you keep yourself in that charnel ground to the end?
VCTR: Keep sitting, I suppose.

S: How do you keep sitting to the end?
VCTR That's what we do: we sit dathiins, we sit nyinthiins, we keep sitting. Sooner or later these vultures begin to come along, when they are hungry. They may not come to you when they are not hungry, but sooner or later, when they are hungry, they want to eat you up and they *will* come—from all over the place.

S: Do you think that all the deceit, stupidity, and lack of direct, complete, total enlightenment that takes place among humanity is due to the teachings of the theistic tradition?
VCTR: I wouldn't say that, particularly. What do you have in mind, sir?

S: Then why you keep suggesting that?
VCTR: I think it has to do with family structure. That is, in any nontheistic approach to spiritual discipline, you have to give up your home life to begin with. You have to go to a desert, or to a monastery, a nunnery, or an abbey. You have to go to all kinds of places. That suggests giving up home, giving up parental figures. That is the first step of the nontheistic approach.

S: You say that we are not debating the basic doctrines of the theistic tradition. However, theism isn't so stupid as to be just relating to a father figure. Certainly, it's gone beyond that. Theism is much more sophisticated than that. Even *babies* have gone beyond that!
VCTR: I quite agree with you. I think that all of our sophistication may have become a problem.

S: I mean, people are two-faced all over the world, even if they're Confucian!
VCTR: Whatever you say.

S: When you describe these difficult subjects, you do so in terms of analogies and metaphors. Do you mean for us to relate to those literally? And in terms of the things we experience in our meditation—are those experiences glimpses of what you are describing?
VCTR: That's very difficult to say. When you hear all this, at some point you have to take things very literally. When we talk about thirst, you have to hear it in relationship with your ordinary thirst, being in the desert. When we talk about the burning heat of passion—or anger for that matter—you have to take it very personally. Things become very vivid to us through these means; and if there's

enough humor, things become spacious as well as vivid. That is the point we have been making—the spaciousness in the humor or the celebration. We are not talking about your being on the battlefield, but about leading your life.

S: Could you say more about what the five buddha families have to do with all this?
VCTR: They have to do with personality and how we relate with our basic ground. We relate with our aggression, we relate with our passion, and we relate with our all-space—or our spacelessness—all over the place. If we begin to relate with those processes in term of the five buddha families, they become different colors that can manifest in mid-air, like a rainbow. So we are talking about rain and clouds and showers and sunlight and space. Once we talk about those, then we can talk about their manifestations very easily, which brings us to the five buddha-family principle.

S: Is it helpful to relate to a particular family that we identity with, or is it better to be aware of all five?
VCTR: Working with the five buddha families becomes more like an astrological chart-making process if you begin to look at it as personal identification. The five buddha-family set-up is not personal identification but a general perspective. For instance, in order to drink a cup of tea, you have to have cold water and hot water and fire and tea leaves; otherwise, you can't make a cup of tea. The five-buddha-family set-up constitutes everything within our realm of experience. In our experience there are highlights, lowlights, and energies. Everything is involved with the five buddha-family set-up, so I don't think it's all that specific or all that personal. However, on the whole, that combination might become personal.

S: Let's go back to the vultures. I have a feeling that sometimes it is rather stupid to let the vultures devour you. Is this purely defensiveness? Is there's another way of reacting to the vultures besides letting them devour you, or is it always wise to let them devour you?

VCTR: Interestingly, when you begin to see the vultures, you may think you have a feeling, but actually you don't have a feeling—you are petrified. You are completely spaced out and you don't have any feeling. Intellectually and personally, everything's completely frozen. I'm sure that people who are involved with an emergency situation such as a car crash or jumping or falling from a high building don't have feeling. In a situation like that, you are suddenly stuck with a challenge, which you can't manipulate at all. Your intellectualization begins,to wear out and your sense of openness becomes frozen, so the whole area becomes a solid block. You are stuck in the midst of an ice block. That seems to be the case even if that catastrophic situation happens on a small scale or only for a few seconds. You are still a block of ice in the midst of a block of ice. That experience takes place constantly, and it is not particularly a problem. One doesn't have to get rid of that experience or cultivate that experience—it just happens. It is not particularly a mistake—or even intentional, for that matter—it's just something that generally happens, something that takes place.

S: Isn't getting caught up in your thoughts also very vivid?
VCTR: It is the same thing.

S: Is it because you still think you *have* something that the paranoia or fear comes in? If you've got nothing, you've got nothing to lose; therefore, the paranoia is overcome.
VCTR: I think so. Yes.

S: That's why you should be eaten completely.
VCTR: Yes.

S: Then they won't come back for any more!
VCTR: Completely! Absolutely!

S: About the corpse lying there—how does that relate with the sense of not feeling guilty about having something to rip out?
VCTR: That depends on your attitude. We are talking about a regular corpse.

FIVE

Loose and Awake

A sambhogakaya person is an individual who possesses all kinds of attributes, immeasurable facets. He or she has a sense of depth and a sense of width; a sense of heaviness and a sense of lightness; a sense of extreme weight and a sense of floating; a sense of being utterly dull and a sense of being utterly, extraordinarily colorful.

The sense of humor provides enormous background and perspective—not only for practitioners, but on the level of cosmic plan, so to speak. The five wisdom energies can only be worked with through basic lightness, combining a light touch and wholeheartedness. In our lives, when things become too serious, too well-meaning, we find that we don't have any room to do anything at all, there is no creativity. We might be working very hard in our particular job, and we might be devoting constant attention to facts and figures; however, there is something lacking. We might blame that lack on our colleagues, our employees, our boss, our environment, or our particular social set-up. However, in doing so, we only find that we are becoming gigantic banks of complaints rather than actually achieving anything, properly speaking. Such is life. That is always the problem. So how is life?

With an understanding of basic principles, and realizing our shortcomings or longcomings, we begin to click to humor. We see

that things are not actually as rigid and tight as we expected. Instead, they begin to become passive, workable, and playful, which is precisely the meaning of sambhogakaya—that playful and pleasurable aspect. We could extend that vocabulary by saying, "transcendental indulgence." Of course, at the sambhogakaya level, that playful or indulgent aspect takes place in terms of transcending both pain and pleasure simultaneously.

When that general sambhogakaya quality of playfulness and pleasure begins to take place, we find that there is a sense of room. Everything is not limited to our own inadequacy, but the whole process becomes workable. It is like being on top of a mountain: we have the perspective of the surrounding hills and lesser mountains, and we could watch the distant clouds and the mist rising. We have a sense of complete joy and complete freedom. At this level, the question of indulgence is not one of becoming more and more decadent and aggressive, more completely involved in the passion, blood, and dirt of neurosis. Instead, indulgence is the sense of utmost celebration. There is light-heartedness because the things that happen in our life do not mean very much. They do not mean all that much, and at the same time, they mean a great deal. Because of that, a lot more fun and a lot more inquisitiveness takes place in our life. With this perspective, every pine needle—how each pine needle behaves when it is swayed by wind—is an exquisite vision.

Sometimes we are too involved with the aesthetics of the world. For instance, if we are watching the moon and the clouds running across it, we would like to associate more with the clouds than with the moon—so we find that the moon is moving rather than that we are moving or the clouds are moving. However, that whole process becomes very powerful and refreshing. It is refreshing in the sense that this is the very first time we have experienced a love affair. Although we might have been involved in a love affair for a long time, or maybe we are in a love affair all the time, each time it is refreshing—and permanent, in some sense. That's the illusion.

That process of delight should make one's heart light and one's breath gentle, one's neck loose and one's jaw relaxed. Things don't become one hassle on top of another hassle all the time, and we no longer hold a constant grudge against our life and the unworkability of whatever it may be. Instead, it becomes a natural process. In fact, there is no point in holding a grudge against anything at all! Not only is there no point, it is needless! There's no *need* for *anything}.* There's no point in shedding tears unnecessarily for our particular situation. Instead, the process becomes very loose, but at the same time, extraordinarily responsible, because we are so awake.

Looseness and awakeness tend to make an ideal person, and that ideal person is known as a sambhogakaya person. *Sambhoga* means "enjoyment" and *kaya* means "body," "person," or "individual." A sambhogakaya person is an individual who possesses all kinds of attributes, immeasurable facets. He or she has a sense of depth and a sense of width; a sense of heaviness and a sense of lightness; a sense of extreme weight and a sense of floating; a sense of being utterly dull and a sense of being utterly, extraordinarily colorful. Those facets and combinations can take place all the time, once there is the basic establishment of what it is all about altogether. There is no problem at all. In fact, we don't have to associate ourselves with one particular aspect alone—we can encompass *all* of those facets at once.

The various types of sambhogakaya persons are described in five different ways, known as the five buddha families: vajra, ratna, padma, karma, and buddha. The vajra family is connected with the notion of immeasurable intellect. The intellect of the vajra family cuts through any other intellect with a sense of joy and relaxation. It has the sense of clear-seeing. By clearly seeing all principles, all metaphysical systems can be seen through and cut through. On the one hand, all metaphysical principles could be regarded as unnecessary; on the other hand, all metaphysical systems could be regarded as worthwhile. Nevertheless, that cutting quality constantly takes place. The vajra approach is very cool, like a crisp, wintry morning,

and not particularly friendly The only friendliness that exists is a celebration and feast of the mind. In the vajra family, a feast of prajna takes place constantly

The ratna family has a sense of immense richness, a richness that can continue forever. It is the richness of earth and its fermentation to the level of shit—or diarrhea, for that matter. That fermentation or shit can be accommodated as magnificent incense, as fragrant incense that can serve the buddhas of the ten directions. Ratna is extremely potent. It is not particularly cutting. Ratna is the elemental process of consuming. Ratna consumption is like fire, which slowly touches, contacts, and consumes, and finally, begins to make something out of something else. It's like the process of fermentation. When something is fermented, that process does not allow any room, none whatsoever. Ratna consumes the whole area and absolutely covers the entire ground. Along with that, there is also a sense of delightfulness. Ratna is not particularly unfriendly. There is a sense of awake. It is as if the active chemical ingredients, which are very awake and intelligent, know exactly what to do with the whole process.

Padma is a question of magnetizing. At this level, earth and sky meet and begin to make love. Through that proclamation of love, all other lovers are inspired and made to be horny, so to speak. The trees and flowers, rocks and vampires—anything that exists in the world—are made horny, so they are inspired to make love. In talking about making love, we are not particularly discussing sex, although sex is usually the first thing that comes into our mind. The padma process is more than that. It is beyond that level, although it may include that level as well, of course. Padma is the meeting point. Padma is magnetization that is improvised constantly and thoroughly.

In the padma family, perkiness, or intelligence, takes place as well. There is a sense of perspective, so when there is a meeting, you do not become completely intoxicated and blinded by it. You are not completely wrapped up in your particular copulation process, meta-

phorically speaking. Likewise, the sky and earth do not get frustrated by their instant copulation—which takes place for years and years, thousands of millions of years. Sky and earth have been copulating all the time; nevertheless, both the sky and the earth have their momentum: time to create summer, time to create autumn, time to create winter, and time to create spring. So their copulation doesn't become just simple possessiveness. It is not like being bound, or an imprisonment—instead, it is a delightful dance. In that dance, no bureaucracy is involved and there is no calculation. When the time for snowfall happens, it takes place. Both earth and sky agree upon that; nobody is overpowering either of them. When it is time to rain, time to create a hailstorm, or time to produce crops or greenery, it happens. The whole process becomes extremely natural and workable—a dance takes place.

In the case of the padma family, the word *copulation* refers to pragmatic situations, rather than to sexual intercourse alone. For instance, you could talk about the copulation of the contents of a building, like those of us sitting here, and the building itself. This copulation works in such a way that there's no complaint on the part of the building that too many people are sitting on the floor, and the floor doesn't drop down. That process slowly begins to work its way through our system altogether and throughout the universe. An immense magnetizing process of accommodating one another is taking place constantly.

We have to be quite clear that padma is not purely bounded by the level of sex, or seduction. It is not a salesman's mentality, and it is not like walking into a whorehouse, where you feel the vibration of sexuality the minute you walk into the doorway. Padma is slightly more open-minded than that. In fact, the other would be imprisonment. It would be a painful process and a disgrace, in some sense. Padma is very clear and open: whenever a dance needs to take place, that magnetizing process takes birth. From the point of view of earth and sky, up and below, east and west, south and north, that dance

takes place simultaneously. That magnetizing is constantly active. In the padma family there is a constant panoramic magnetizing process. That seems to be the basic point.

The karma family is one of constant activity. Activity, here, does not mean that somebody is constantly speeding along, having to achieve his or her particular job or idea. The karma principle is not about being an utter busybody and making enemies all along. The definition of the karma principle is that it offers fulfillment because all activities are *already* fulfilled. What one has to do is to instigate that particular message to the rest of the world. So in the case of the karma family, activity is there already, a process is already happening; whereas, in the other approach of speeding along, that process is not yet happening. You might find it difficult to relate with that, so you try to shout. You are trying to run a project, so you pull everybody out of their bed in their pajamas in the middle of the morning and make them work. That seems to be the wrong approach. It is not at all karma-family activity. It is just some kind of hellish trip.

In the case of the karma family, plans have already happened. Political understandings have already taken place. There are reasonable situations taking place constantly, so the only way to act is to acknowledge that and to look into it and what's happening around it intelligently and very simply. By doing that, the process becomes very natural—and every project initiated in this way actually *does* get fulfilled. Such projects become absolutely successful projects because your project, your plan of work, and your vigor are not based on the idea that you have to initiate the whole thing, you have to think cleverly, or you have to go against the grain of the sand. Things actually do exist already, so you do not have to be particularly smart in order to initiate something. You can only be up to that if you are awake enough to see what's already happening. When the gun is loaded, you don't have to be a busybody about guns; the only thing you have to do is pull the trigger. That seems to be the general idea of the karma wisdom of accomplished action, or karma activity. The

gun is already loaded—all one has to do is aim it and pull the trigger.

The sense of humor pervades the entire five buddha-family process; otherwise, we are in trouble. Within that sense of humor, or basic intelligence, the buddha family energy is the process of being solid and noncommittal, which tends to bring immense dignity. It brings immense magnetizing, immense pacifying, immense destroying, and immense enriching, as well. And once again, as far as buddha energy is concerned, let me remind you that it is a natural process.

In the case of the buddha family, you don't say anything and you don't act out anything at all. Instead, by *being* so, by *being as it is,* you begin to create some kind of infiltration. Instead of being completely verbal, in the buddha family the gesture begins to become the message. That seems to be the basic process. Things can develop or not develop, but whatever happens, you are not moved. In fact, you are not swayed by incoming messages of any kind. You have immense dignity. The buddha family attitude is that things have already been fulfilled—they are immensely fulfilled already, from that point of view.

In describing the five buddha families, I have come across a lot of people asking why there are only five. There is no particular logic as to why there should be five or six or ten thousand million. The buddha families are part of your mind. Similarly, we could ask why there are five primary colors or five directions. There are five buddha families because all potential human energies are included in those five principles. But that does not necessarily mean that those five families are the only energies that exist. All kinds of things can be included in what we are as human beings. There are also borderline situations, in which two families or three families are mixed together, which might be considered another family. But if we look thoroughly, fully, and clearly, we find that there are only five main principles or potentialities taking place. Research and study on the five buddha families has been done within the 2500 years of the

existence of Buddha's teaching; and we have a lot of trust in those people's research work, practice, and understanding. Our point of view is that we can't question that—not because it is the complete truth of the Bible, but because it is the complete truth in terms of practice experience.

The five buddha-family process has provided immense friendly guidance to a lot of us. It has been one of the main ways to subjugate immense aggression and uptightness. Such aggression is taking place all the time. Usually, we are pissed off at our world. We have lots of complaints when things don't fulfill their function in our life—our husband is not being properly husbandly, our wife is not performing her duties, our brothers and sisters are not properly behaving, our friends are not helping us, and our guru's not being kind to us. We have lots of complaints, all kinds! We could begin by being pissed off at little sand flies brushing our cheek, and from that level, we could interpret our complaints to the infinite level: "It was the fault of my father that that sand fly sat on my cheek and ate me up. It was the fault of my guru. My guru led me to this miserable life."

Although all kinds of problems and all kinds of angry situations take place immensely, all the time, that doesn't mean that you are a special case, at all. There are no special cases, none whatsoever! You are part of the world. Everybody is part of the rest of the gray world, absolutely. Nobody is a special case. Nobody has some special potentiality for attaining enlightenment, any more than anybody else. Nobody has the particular potentiality of being a reject. We all are made out of these five types, these five different buddha family processes. That's why we need to understand that every situation is always workable.

You don't have to change your personality, your sambhogakaya manifestation. You don't have to try to make an angry person into a peaceful one, and speedy people do not have to become slower. That approach seems to be based on the Christian ethics of reforming or final conversion. In this case, we are not asking for a change or shift;

instead, you maintain your existence. You try to evaluate your existence, your level of experience, personally and properly. That seems to be the basic point. The question doesn't arise of: "I'm out of samsara, I'm into nirvana." If you think in those terms, you need more sitting practice. You have to think more. Your approach is premature and too primitive. You are still approaching things at the preparatory school level. You have to relate to yourself at the level of humor in the sambhogakaya process—much more so. Once that space and sense of delightfulness is taking place, there is no problem—none whatsoever—in tuning yourself into those five buddha family principles.

Again, I would like to mention that it is not particularly that you have to belong to one particular buddha family, as in an astrology chart. You have the potentials of all five buddha families. However, they work together in such a way that you might have different buddha family expressions, or manifest more in one way than another way. On the whole, looking from the neurotic angle, all those processes might be regarded as hang-ups. But they are not hang-ups, they are promises. Or maybe *potentialities* is a better word.

To summarize: If there is a sense of rejoicing and being willing to work with yourself, rather than purely wanting to change the situation, then I think you are ready to have a glimpse of the sambhogakaya principle. Otherwise, you are still going through immense blockages. It is not that you don't possess potentiality, but your potentiality has been blocked—by *you* personally. You won't let yourself give you a good time anymore. The idea is to experience all of these buddha families as a celebration of life. The whole message of the sambhogakaya principle is that sense of celebration. The sambhogakaya principle brings a sense of celebration and a sense of magnificent pride. If you feel you are inadequate to that, then something must be screwed up, fundamentally and basically. You should go back to the hinayana level, if that happens. But you still have a chance!

STUDENT: I was wondering, presuming that you're talking on a psy-

chological level and also on a larger level of cosmic description, what the *body* quality of the kayas is. Why are they described as *bodies?*

VIDYADHARA CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: Basically, body is a reference point to what's happening. If there's no body, there's no reference point.

S: Is the body, in that sense, a container?

VCTR: Yes, you could say that. It is a receiver, a container, an editor.

S: There seems to be a relationship between the first four buddha families and the four karmas, and the buddha family seems to combine them.

VCTR: I think so, yes. That's how it should be, in fact. Although the vajra family is related with the vajra neurosis of anger or aggression, it is also related with the opposite, the karma of pacifying.

S: In what way is the buddha family energy destructive as well as pacifying?

VCTR: Basically, it is destructive from the point of view of ego. Ego suicide tends to happen constantly. If you indulge your particular character, if you nurse that and you become a superstar—finally you commit suicide in a hotel bedroom, or you become a great fighter and you are killed on the spot. That's just a general, primitive analogy, but the fundamental idea is that you are building a gigantic kingdom of egohood, and in doing so, you are using your potentialities as crutches. You may have vajra intellect abilities, or karma fulfillment abilities; but you try to use those in your own way, rather than share with anybody else. You don't want to give to anybody. You would like to preserve your territory. You don't even want to give into any of your colleagues or to share your space. You would like to hold onto your particular world and your particular territory.

S: I have found it useful to work with the buddha families as a way to give me more perspective. For example, in looking at or describing a situation, I find myself feeling that's the way it is; and I relate to the

particular buddha family style or quality that characterizes my description. But then I realize that that's only one way of describing it, that I can think about it in other ways, such as in a padma way, a vajra way, or a buddha way. Do you think that's a useful way to work with the buddha families? I find that that it allows me to give the situation some space. Instead of feeling that my way of describing it is *it*, I am able to see other points of view. Do you think that's an appropriate way to use the energies?

VCTR: I wouldn't make a big deal out of it, because things exist in their own way, anyway. Whatever you do, others are going to do it in their own particular style. So, at this point, using the five types of approach is arbitrary. You're going to approach things that way, anyway. It seems to be a very natural process, not a big deal. The whole thing needs to have some humor or scope. It is like behaving like a Gentile or a Jew. Either is okay, whichever way you behave, but there might be some problems coming along with that style. If you don't have humor around what you are, you're going to be involved with troubles and fights.

S: This sense of delightfulness transcends birth, pain, and death, but at the same time it never loses touch with these, right? It never gets wrapped up in its own quality of enjoyment or humor, but it stays on the ground, in touch with the pain.

VCTR: Why not? Pain is the most valuable learning lesson we have. Without pain we would not be here, for that matter, to discuss anything. On one hand, there are millions of people waiting to come here, too, because their pain is so intense. On the other hand, people run away from here because it's too painful—or they are just about to, they're thinking about it.

S: Suppose you suddenly feel a loss or change of identity in which you play a role that seems appropriate, but there's nothing cozy about it and nothing familiar about it, and you don't exactly know who you are—can your buddha family style change in midstream?

VCTR: You're not expected to change.

S: No, but it seems to happen.

VCTR: If that comes up, let it go that way. I mean, we can't just say, "This is right. I'm not going to change. You can't impose a new role on me. I am a Virgo and I'm going to remain a Virgo because my birthday says so." It's quite different than that. There is a process, which takes place simply and constantly. Let that process be so, whatever it is. Good or bad doesn't matter.

S: You emphasized that the five buddha families are especially connected with the immediate present. I was trying to understand whether it's a matter of trying to avoid thinking of them as past and future or whether we could in each situation, from moment to moment, try to discover within ourselves all of the buddha families or some combination.

VCTR: The point is that whatever is taking place on the spot is the particular principle that you have to work with. If something comes up, you have that particular style and you have your own particular style of dealing with the whole thing. So you develop your tactics and mentalities. That takes place on the spot, definitely. You could also take humor in that and pride.

S: Why are you talking about the buddha families in connection with the sambhogakaya? Are they especially connected with that body, or kaya?

VCTR: Very much so, yes, They are particularly connected with the level of somebody.

S: Is that a pun?

VCTR: Somebody, or sambhogakaya—as opposed to dharmakaya, which is nobody, and nirmanakaya, which is everybody. Policy making, how you handle yourself, takes place in the sambhogakaya. Sambhogakaya is the policy-making process. When you are already *there,* at the level of nirmanakaya, you have already made your policy

as to how to handle your life. It's already happening. The nirmanakaya is different in that the only requirement then is awareness. At the level of sambhogakaya, you are just making acquaintance with your policy-making. It's like landing on the ground: before you land on the ground, you have to choose which ground to land on. That is when your five types of buddha energy begin to take place.

S: Is the descent from the dharmakaya level down all part of the cosmic disaster?
VCTR: Everything!

S: So all the kayas, starting from the pre-dharmakaya level, are just increasingly more of a disaster?
VCTR: I think so. The whole thing began with the dharmakaya. The dharmakaya is the first disaster, which initiates the rest of it. It is not particularly necessary. Nevertheless it happened, and we have to go along with it.

S: You said that you experience joy at the sambhogakaya level in working with yourself and a sense of celebration. You said that if you can't do that, at least there's the hinayana level left. I guess that must be the nirmanakaya level, where the Buddha is actually here in a physical body. This sounds quite bleak to me. Previously, it didn't seem like such a disaster, that the Buddha was in a human body.
VCTR: We are not just talking about having a body, but about having such a dualistic *idea* of the whole thing. We have to have black and white, good and bad—the samsara and nirvana syndrome. That we have to discuss this at all is unfortunate. It's terrible! However, since we are in this boat already, we might as well go along. There is no choice. That's why the dharma is so full—and we have the best of it!

S: Then am I to understand that primarily what we have is just an increasing awareness of the process? And that awareness can go on and on and on, without any particular change, just awareness itself making movements?

VCTR: Sure. So what?

S: There is a famous psychologist who has a theory that the cosmic disaster was the seeding of this planet by DNA, and now it's time for us to build our starship and go back to the center.
VCTR: There is no center. Every area is the center. There's no center to go back to. There is no home, home is everywhere

S: Rinpoche, in terms of the appreciation of detail and the sense of humor, I was wondering if it might be possible to get really trippy about it, and get so caught up in trying to pay attention to every detail of everything, that you would not be able to do anything. Does that happen, or is there a safeguard?
VCTR: I think you can appreciate details, provided you have some sense of the whole project being based on egolessness, some sense that you are not supposed to have any feedback or anything particularly prescribed. That seems to be okay. However, if you begin to get into trips of all kinds, your attention-to-detail awareness begins to become hollow, purely a game. So I think it depends on how your general attitude has evolved.

six Buddha is Everywhere

Buddha can't be avoided, buddha is everywhere.
Enlightenment possibilities are all over the place.
Whether you're going to get married tomorrow,
whether you're going to die tomorrow,
whatever you might feel, that familiar nirmanakaya
awake quality is everywhere, all the time.

The sambhogakaya is twofold: the sambhogakaya that is experienced and manifests in the form of the five buddha-family process and the sambhogakaya that deals equally with the nonstructured mind world, or the world of the five buddha families, and the body world, the world of music, voice, or speech. At this level, the sambhogakaya principle is the initiator of anything that happens in our life—constantly. The sambhogakaya is the *instigator* of everything that takes place in our life, rather than life itself. When something occurs in our life that is subject to panic, the sambhogakaya principle acts as panic. For instance, when there is discontinuity and noncommunication between mind and body, suddenly something pops up, and all at once there is communication. At that point, when the mind and the physical world communicate together, panic begins to take place. The sambhogakaya principle is also how our body and mind relate with words—how mind and body combine together in the physical manifestation of verbalizing, or making noises. At the ape level, it is grunt;

at the sophisticated level, it is music; at the mystical level, it is mantra.

The sambhogakaya principle leads to the nirmanakaya principle. It seems that we don't have any choice about that. The sambhogakaya process begins to take place constantly; and from there, we are approaching the nirmanakaya. That is to say, we are approaching the earthly, physical, bodily situation. The nirmanakaya is the physical, bodily state of existence. It is everything we experience in the audio-visual world in the very ordinary sense. The sun rises, the pine trees hiss in the wind, the rock sits, and waters flow—all those processes are manifestations of the sambhogakaya principle. The sambhogakaya is being transmitted into the nirmanakaya as a real life process. Everything we go through in our life is a manifestation of the sambhogakaya principle.

Also included in the nirmanakaya are actual representations of the sambhogakaya principle: actual physical images are made, the actual voice of dharma is heard, actual living human teachers exist on this earth. All of those are manifestations of sanity coming down—unnecessarily, from the point of view of dharmakaya, of course. Still, those unnecessary processes become necessary at some point. It's like collecting maple syrup from a tree. The first drip descends into the branch, then the branch begins to collect drips, next the drips begin to fall into the bucket, *finally* you have maple syrup in your bucket.

Finally, at the nirmanakaya level, something's actually taking place. Those long-winded descriptions and ideas, those intangible, unbiased, unconditional ideas and thoughts of enlightenment are finally captured in this particular sieve of the human mind. You can actually see the physical guru and you can actually prostrate to this physical guru and touch his or her feet. You could worship that particular person, who represents *all* those unconditional processes and *all* of that basic sanity. Immense space, created through the process of enlightened awareness, is finally manifested on earth. That seems to be the basic point.

In regard to the nirmanakaya, there are various types of nirmanakaya. For instance, the Buddha Shakyamuni, Gautama Buddha, was one person. He was born and raised in India, educated in India, and he attained enlightenment by meditating wholeheartedly, and so forth. We also have other examples, other great teachers who are following that particular principle and approach. We have various teachers, masters, gurus of the lineage, who all represent that process. Most of all, we have a sense of earthy touch taking place, a panoramic experience within everyday life. When somebody has heard of the teachings, then that particular person begins to look into every aspect of our life, from the loftiest ideas of philosophy to very manual, basic, ordinary things, such as sitting on a toilet seat. Everything's covered.

The nirmanakaya principle exists in every situation. The nirmanakaya principle exists in a baby's diaper. It exists in our pencils and pad. The nirmanakaya exists at the level of our money. It exists in the flat tire on our motorcar and in the police checking on our speeding. The nirmanakaya principle exists in every situation of our life. So the nirmanakaya principle is related with the ordinary minds of individual students who care to relate with their lives properly. Instead of worshipping some higher principle, in the nirmanakaya, people who are into the dharma properly begin to find a sense of worship, sacredness, gracefulness, and grace in everyday life. That is, the nirmanakaya principle exists in our everyday lives.

As a matter of fact, every activity that takes place in our lives is nirmanakaya expression. That nirmanakaya expression has two types: the confused version and the enlightened version. The confused version is regarded purely as a hassle, or an expression of neurosis; and the enlightened version is that within all that there is a sense of sacredness. So having a sculpture or painting of nirmanakaya buddha or being involved with graphic situations and experiences in our everyday life are both regarded as nirmanakaya. If you have a graphic experience such as a car crash or running a red light

the very directness of whatever is taking place in your life is regarded as nirmanakaya expression. The cosmic approach, the larger metaphysical and enlightened approach that takes place in our life, is included in the nirmanakaya—and the petty little details that exist in our life are included in the nirmanakaya, as well.

Expenditure... exposure... encompass... space. [Pause]

The process of nirmanakaya tends to become very powerful at times, because of its claustrophobic quality or watchfulness. Everywhere we turn, around every corner, there is nirmanakaya. We can't just hang out loose. In other words, everything is a reminder of all kinds of things. But that's not particularly regarded as a phenomenological situation—it is just the basic awareness that the nirmanakaya cannot be avoided. In other words, buddha can't be avoided, buddha is everywhere. Enlightenment possibilities are all over the place. Whether you're going to get married tomorrow, whether you're going to die tomorrow, whatever you might feel, that familiar nirmanakaya awake quality is everywhere, all the time.

Some systematizing of this whole process has developed throughout the history of Buddhism, the 2500 years of Buddhist reign in this world on this particular planet Earth. There is constant pressure that people should sit, meditate, and lead their lives in the Buddhistic way. That is actually adopting just a *fraction* of nirmanakaya activities. The rest of it relies highly on awareness and devotion. In this sense, devotion means being willing to face the possibility that the all-encompassing space of nirmanakaya takes place eternally in our life, whether we want it or we don't want it.

STUDENT: Is there any difference between phenomena in general, all phenomena, and the expression in the phenomenal world of the harmonious relationship of the three kayas? Are the three kayas like the footprint of Buddha in the phenomenal world?

VIDYADHARA CHOGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE: I think everything

is a footprint, actually, including the basic spaced-out experience we might feel and the sense that we are split in our personalities. It is not that we are schizophrenic, but we are split into five types of personalities, five different expressions. We also have the sense of relating with every detail in life, seeking answers, questioning, looking into life as it is. From this point of view, everything is a footprint, anything that goes on, whether we regard it as sublime or ridiculous. Everything we do—breathing, farting, getting mosquito bites, having fantastic ideas about reality, thinking clever thoughts, flushing the toilet—whatever occurs is a footprint. That is why enlightenment is referred to as *en-lighten-ment,* rather than as a big gain of freedom. It is further *luminosity,* it *illuminates* life. Up to this point, we had a very bad lighting system; but now we are getting a better lighting system, so we begin to see every curve of skin, every inch of our world, properly. We might get very irritated by such sharpness and precision, but that seems to be part of the perspective.

S: Does that mean that there's no such thing as a bad poem?
VCTR: That's right! If you look at it from that angle, not talking from an editor's attitude, but in terms of cosmic style, bad poems are very cute. In their own way, they are fantastic!

S: You talked about how nirmanakaya always comes up in all these day-to-day experiences. I'm curious as to why you used the term, *nirmanakaya,* as opposed to dharmakaya or sambhogakaya?
VCTR: Nirmanakaya is the physical situation; sambhogakaya and dharmakaya are the level of mind.

S: Would it be wrong to say that the sambhogakaya produces the nirmanakaya, or that nirmanakaya is the outcome of the sambhogakaya?
VCTR: I don't think that the sambhogakaya produces the nirmanakaya. Nirmanakaya is a self-existing situation. Dharmakaya is like the sun; sambhogakaya is like the rays; and nirmanakaya is like the rays hitting the objects on the earth. So it is a self-existing situation.

S: Lama Govinda used the terms *seed, subtle,* and *gross* in describing the relationship of the three bodies: dharmakaya as seed, sambhogakaya as subtle, and nirmanakaya as gross. Is that an error on his part?
VCTR: I wouldn't say that dharmakaya is a seed, particularly. Dharmakaya is more than a seed—it's all-pervasive. Calling it a seed is a poverty-mentality approach to dharmakaya. Instead of shooting a rocket into the atmosphere, you shoot a gun, which doesn't have any sense of confirmation or expansion. Secondly, the sambhogakaya is not all that subtle, it is very obvious. For instance, the five buddha-family principle is obvious. Finally, the nirmanakaya is not at all gross. It is the most refined form that one could ever think of in the universe! It is seeing things as extremely subtle and as extraordinarily sophisticated as we can ever appreciate. It is the highest of class, if you would like to call it that, the highest form of sophistication. So it's *far* from being gross! Lama Govinda's approach seems to be slightly different, bless his heart.

S: Would you say more about the efforts to systematize nirmanakaya? Is that what Buddhism is all about? That's what occurs to me.
VCTR: I think so, definitely. Ordinarily, we can't say that everything's okay because there's chaos, things don't make any sense. So we have to begin somewhere. We have to learn to think properly, which is meditation; we have to learn to walk, which is also meditation; we have to learn how to behave. Learning to behave in a certain way is a very rough guide to the nirmanakaya, a nirmanakaya-fype of approach. We are actually copying the behavior of Buddha. The way Buddha walked, the way Buddha talked, the way Buddha thought—we are just copying that, very simply. There are no trips involved, there's no philosophy. We just simply take Buddha as the example. We are simply doing that as ordinary people. That is Buddha-ism, I suppose we could call it.

S: You said dharmakaya and sambhogakaya were unnecessary, but you haven't said that about nirmanakaya.

VCTR: We've done that already, so we can't even bother to say that it's unnecessary. Nirmanakaya has expanded its own world altogether, so we have a very elaborate samsaric world set-up. That has happened already, and we have to go along with it.

S: Is nirmanakaya equivalent to the samsaric world?
VCTR: It's getting very close. We are sharing the samsaric world finally, rather than having lofty ideas.

S: You said that in going from sambhogakaya to nirmanakaya, you choose your ground. Could you say something about choosing ground?
VCTR: In that case, we were talking about choosing ground because you have *no* ground. Usually when we choose ground we have one ground and then we choose another ground, which doesn't make any sense in the short run or the long run. I don't think we can speculate too much on that, it would be purely a waste of our time.

S: There's a Zen story in which a Zen master asks his disciple to demonstrate his understanding. The disciple shakes a tree, and the master says, "You understand the function but not the essence." I'd like to know if that is related to the three bodies. Is the dharmakaya the essence and the nirmanakaya and sambhogakaya the function?
VCTR: Very much so—and I think we are concerned with the function, definitely.

S: Is that sambhogakaya?
VCTR: That is nirmanakaya. It is how things work rather than why things are there. People constantly ask, "Why?" like a two-year-old child. But somehow, persons begin to learn the lesson of *not* asking why things are as they are, by throwing the question back to themselves. The nirmanakaya level is purely functional, how to survive. Beyond that, we don't have to be concerned too much with the dharmakaya and sambhogakaya, they just come along. They do exist. If you are interested in the why of their existence, the answer

is: because they don't exist, that's why they do exist. That is a pragmatic answer, rather than a theoretical one.
S: When you said that you use it everyday, but you don't pay any attention to it, like being able to move your arm, for instance, I took that to mean the life force. Is that nirmanakaya or sambhogakaya or both?
VCTR: Well, that's a bit tricky. One has to pay attention to it, but one shouldn't; one needs to, but one shouldn't. But when you are told you shouldn't, you actually pay *more* attention, because you want to find out.

S: The sixth Patriarch says that samadhi is the body of the buddha and that prajna does not exist apart from the three bodies. Would you say something about that?
VCTR: I think that's quite true. I agree with him. Good luck for him, the Great Sixth One!

S: Is the sense of sacredness the same as the sense of celebration?
VCTR: I think they are identical, definitely. That's a good question.

S: I was very moved by what you said about everything being a footprint. It sounds as if, in order to appreciate the real significance of things, you need to see that there is something beyond, encompassing what is apparent. It is sort of like a poem rather than prose—not the content, but the resonance.
VCTR: Mm-hmm. It's a hoof-print.

S: Rjnpoche, the kayas are called the three bodies of enlightenment. Are they levels or styles of enlightenment? Because I have the feeling that they are also descriptions of the world.
VCTR: They are various functions of enlightenment. It is like having a heart, a brain, a muscular system, and limbs: all of those are operating at the same time. Likewise, all three kayas are operating at the same time. It is like having a motor and a driver and wheels: they function in the same way. It's wrong to look at it in terms of a case

history—that one comes first, then the second one comes, and then the third one. The three kayas have been presented that way in many cases, and it is true, in some sense, technically. But in terms of presentation, that approach is a mistake, because people will tend to think that if you get the dharmakaya, you don't need the rest. They will think that you can get rid of the others, the bothersome nirmanakaya and sambhogakaya, and just dwell on dharmakaya. But, somehow, that never happens.

There is an expression, *kusum yerme,* which means "the indivisibility of the three bodies." That indivisibility seems to be the basic point, particularly advocated by our particular lineage of Kagyii. In the Kagyii tradition, it is always said that the three kayas come simultaneously. In your system, as you operate your life, those three principles happen at once. You are always working with all three of them in that way. I feel that's true, and I think that's a good attitude. Let's stick to our lineage.

S: The dharmakaya was very hard for me to get any understanding of at all, but the nirmanakaya seems *too* simple. It seems too simple to say everything is the buddha or the dharma. I've heard that a lot and I've never quite understood it. It seems like *everything* is nirmanakaya. So is nirmanakaya just a fancy word for the entire world and absolutely everything in it, and that absolutely everything is an expression of the dharma?
VCTR: Yes.

S: I don't understand how absolutely everything can be an expression of the dharma.
VCTR: Dharma in this case is some kind of cosmic plan, but it is not the idea of a God as the maker and creator of the universe, particularly. Instead, anything that goes on has a particular makeup or conditions, which is that everything is transparent and nonexistent—and at the same time, existing. It is like the space that accommodates the world. The quality of space exists in earth, water, fire, and all the

other elements; it is part of all those ingredients. In order to make things function—in order to have cosmic lubrication, so to speak—things have to have that kind of nonexistent, unconditional quality. Otherwise things can't exist; it is against the law of logic, the law of functioning. So in order for things to exist, therefore, things have to *not* exist. Nonexistence provides lubrication, functional growth, and the atmosphere for things to blossom.

Everything is known as dharma, enlightenment, or the buddha principle, because the buddha principle is free of any conditions; and at the same time, it creates further and greater initiative. I think there has been a problem in the past with theistic traditions that say there is something that exists, something that heavily conquers the whole universe. That theistic principle or belief, called God or the Divine, has complete dictatorial power. It doesn't allow any nonexistence or unconditionality.

The mystics were probably an exception to this view, but since they were very smart people, they may have begun to realize that if they stuck to their theory it would be suicidal, doctrinally, so they began to cop out. They got into something else, a more humanistic approach. In fact, throughout the history of Christianity, the mystical schools have been banned because they promote nontheism. The mystics subtly produced little bubbles here and there of a nontheistic tradition, and that was not very well accepted. A lot of mystics suffered execution and all kinds of persecution. I think that is a problem, actually. In this case, when we say everything contains dharma, or the buddha principle, we are not saying that something other has been inserted into our world, or the universe—we are talking about unconditional transparency. Because of that unconditional transparency, things can happen. There is constant lubrication, cosmic lubrication.

STUDENT: How is buddha nature related to the three bodies? Is it dharmakaya or is it all three?
VCTR: All three, hopefully.

S: I don't want to harp too much on one thing, but would you be willing to say, in terms of what we've been discussing, what makes a good poem?
VCTR: What makes a good poem? On the one hand, nothing makes a good poem, actually. What is a poem, anyway? On the other hand, one can make good poems if there is more reliance on the lubrication. When there's no lubrication, everything's just a stack of bricks. Poems become bad poems because there's no sambhoga- kaya humor anymore. Poems become very steep and trippy. From that point of view, excessive aggressive poems written on the idea of war and excessive peaceful poems written on the idea of peace are equally bad, because there's no humor in them. For that matter, excessive poems written on religion and on inspirations of any kind also do not have any humor. Poems are like bread dough: you have to have flour and water, you have to knead properly, and finally you make good bread out of the whole thing. You bake poetry. I think good poetry is very hard to come by—and so is good baking.

S: You said that if you push too hard, the vajra diamond sword will cut you to pieces. What did you mean by pushing too hard?
VCTR: What do you think? Have a guess! First thought is best thought. Take a guess!

S: I don't know. I've been thinking about this for a while. Is it trying to get everything at once?
VCTR: Something like that. I think that might be the case, actually.
S: If the sword doesn't get you, then the vultures will?
VCTR: Not quite. If the sword doesn't get you, your suicide will get you. You're doomed to be destroyed in any case, so it's better to commit hara-kiri. Very heavy.
S: In the meantime, you celebrate?
VCTR: Well said! Good luck, madam.

S: If we were never here in the First place, how come we've had such a good time?

VCTR: That's a corny thing to say. However, we are corny, as we are, and we are here. So what?

S: If you are cut down by the vajra sword, or have the feeling you are being cut, what's the process after that? Do you pick yourself up-pick your parts back up—or do you just stay cut?
VCTR: Nothing.

S: You just stay cut?
VCTR: Nothing.

S: Nothing?

VCTR: Absolutely nothing.

S: It sounds horrible.

VCTR: Whatever. It's not particularly nice and not particularly bad—it's *nothing.* I think we are getting into tantric koan, at this point.
S: Every time we talk about anything, such as what is the footprint of the buddha, every time we ask questions, we seem to make everything very, very complicated and complex. It all seems much more simple than that.

VCTR: I sympathize with us. So what's next?

S: Nothing.

VCTR: Yes, I quite agree with you, two-hundred percent! That is a problem, I suppose. Otherwise we wouldn't keep meeting so late. This whole thing is somewhat absurd. We want to *know* rather than to actually *experience.* That's the problem with the speech principle.
S: It's very unnecessary but it's very necessary.
VCTR: Yes, you said so. That's right.

S: In wanting to experience rather than wanting to know, I've been noticing the last few days that when I'm very tired, I'm not very aware of the space, and I have a lot of trouble seeing the humor in situations.

VCTR: That's good! That *is* humor! Just take a *little* leap after that. That's it!

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